DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 410 955 IR 056 420

AUTHOR	Watson, Elizabeth F., Ed.; Jagannathan, Neela, Ed.
TITLE	Library Services to Distance Learners in the Commonwealth: A Reader.
INSTITUTION	Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver (British Columbia).
ISBN	ISBN-1-895369-47-9
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	245p.
AVAILABLE FROM	COL Customer Service, c/o The Open Learning Agency of BC, 4355 Mathissi Place, Burnaby, British Columbia V5G 4S8, Canada ($12 Canadian).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Information; Computer Mediated Communication; Developed Nations; Developing Nations; *Distance Education; Educational Technology; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Library Services; *Reference Services; Students; Telecommunications; *User Needs (Information)
IDENTIFIERS	*British Commonwealth

ABSTRACT

The provision of good library services is a crucial factor in determining the quality of distance education. This collection of articles acquaints readers with distance librarianship as it is practiced in developed and developing countries throughout the British Commonwealth. The reader includes: "Introduction" (Michael Wooliscroft); "Distance Librarianship: A Perspective" (Elizabeth F. Watson); "The Distance Learner, the Librarian and the Course Development Team" (Janet Jenkins); "Reaching the Remote Student" (Margaret Appleton); "Library Services to Distance Learners: Research and Operational Developments in a U.K. and European Context" (Peter Brophy, Deborah Goodall, and Peter M. Wynne); "Distance Learners and Library Use in Western Canada: the Findings of an Inter-university Survey" (Alexander L. Slade); "Library Services for the University of the West Indies Distance Students" (Beverley A. Steele); "The University of South Africa's Library Services to Distance Learners" (S. H. Behrens and L. M. Grobler); "Serving Learners in a Technical-Vocational Distance Education Programme: Issues for CAST in Jamaica" (Terrence Bobb-Semple); "Library Services to Distance Learners at Massey University: Some Management Issues" (Celia Bockett, Lucy Marsden, and Joan Pitchforth); "A Library Service to Distance Learners: What Should the Library Provide?" (Anthony K. Cavanagh and Joan Tucker); "Initiating the First Steps: the Use of Technology To Provide Library Services to Distance Learners in the Commonwealth Caribbean" (Linda Claudia de Four); "Rendering Equitable Library Services to Distance Learners in India: Problems and Prospects" (Neela Jagannathan); "Library Support--the Missing Link in Support Services at the Secondary Level for the Distance Learner in English-Speaking Africa" (Magnus John); "Providing Support Services for External B.Ed. Distance Learners Programme at the University of Nairobi" (Judith W. Kamau); "Information Technology and Libraries in Distance Education: Present and Future Prospects for India" (Uma Kanjilal); "Overcoming the Tyranny of Distance" (David Meacham and Margaret H. Macpherson); "Library Services for the Open University of Tanzania: Experiences of the First Year" (Geoffrey R. V. Mmari); "Library and Information Science Through Distance Education: the IGNOU Experience" (R.

Satyanarayana); "Library Services to Students at a Distance: A Case Study of the University of Otago Library, Dunedin, New Zealand" (Hayley Solomon); "Open Library Information for Off-Campus Students: The Australian Scenario" (Marie-Therese Van Dyk); and "Factors Affecting the Provision of Library Services to Distance Learners: the Commonwealth Caribbean Experience" (Elizabeth F. Watson). (SWC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 410 955

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

● Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

THE COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

LIBRARY SERVICES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Edited by
Elizabeth F. Watson
& Neela Jagannathan

IR056420

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL
IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Dave Wilson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

LIBRARY SERVICES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS IN THE COMMONWEALTH

A Reader

Edited by
Elizabeth F. Watson
and
Neela Jagannathan

Consulting Editor: Jeniphier R. Carnegie

THE COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

Vancouver

© 1997 by ***The Commonwealth of Learning***

CIP

Library services to distance learners in the Commonwealth: a reader. / Edited by Elizabeth F. Watson and Neela Jagannathan. Consulting editor: Jeniphier R. Carnegie. - Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning, 1996.

p. illus. cm.

ISBN 1-895369-47-9

1. Distance education - Library resources. 2. Distance education - Library resources - Commonwealth countries. I. Watson, Elizabeth F. II. Jagannathan, Neela. III. Carnegie, Jeniphier R. IV. The Commonwealth of Learning.

LC5800.
Z675.

Graphics: Paul S. Gibbs, Learning Resource Centre, The University of the West Indies, Barbados.
Typesetting: E.J. Consultancy Services Inc., Barbados.

Published by
The Commonwealth of Learning, 1285 West Broadway, #600, Vancouver, BC V6H 3X8, Canada.
Tel: (604) 775-8200, Fax: (604) 775-8210, Telex: 04507508 COMLEARN, E-mail: info@col.org

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements v

Preface vi

Foreword vii

Introduction 1
Michael Wooliscroft

Distance librarianship: a perspective 9
Elizabeth F. Watson

The distance learner, the librarian and the course development team 41
Janet Jenkins

Reaching the remote student 45
Margaret Appleton

Library services to distance learners: research and operational developments in a U.K. and European context 55
Peter Brophy, Deborah Goodall and Peter M. Wynne

Distance learners and library use in western Canada: the findings of an inter-university survey 61
Alexander L. Slade

Library services for the University of the West Indies distance students 71
Beverley A. Steele

The University of South Africa's library services to distance learners 83
S.H. Behrens and L.M. Grobler

Serving learners in a technical-vocational distance education programme: issues for CAST in Jamaica 93
Terrence Bobb-Semple

Library services to distance learners at Massey University: some management issues 101
Celia Bockett, Lucy Marsden and Joan Pitchforth

A library service to distance learners: what should the library provide? 109
Anthony K. Cavanagh and Joan Tucker

Initiating the first steps: the use of technology to provide library services to distance learners in the Commonwealth Caribbean 123
Linda Claudia de Four

Rendering equitable library services to distance learners in India: problems and prospects 135
Neela Jagannathan

Library support – the missing link in support services at the secondary level for the distance learner in English-speaking Africa 155
Magnus John

Providing support services for the external B.Ed. distance learners programme at the University of Nairobi 165
Judith W. Kamau

Information technology and libraries in distance education: present and future prospects for India 175
Uma Kanjilal

Overcoming the tyranny of distance 183
David Meacham and Margaret H. Macpherson

Library services for the Open University of Tanzania: experiences of the first year 193
Geoffrey R.V. Mmari

Library and information science through distance education: the IGNOU experience 199
R. Satyanarayana

Library services to students at a distance: a case study of the University of Otago Library, Dunedin, New Zealand 213
Hayley Solomon

Open library information for off-campus students: the Australian scenario 221
Marie-Thérèse Van Dyk

Factors affecting the provision of library services to distance learners: the Commonwealth Caribbean experience 231
Elizabeth F. Watson

About the contributors 241

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors wish to thank all those who have contributed to the publication of this reader. While it is impossible to single out all the many individuals whose efforts have led to the fruition of this work, special mention must be made of the authors whose work we have had the privilege of editing; our consulting editor, who led us in the right direction; the staff of the Learning Resource Centre of the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies and colleagues around the Commonwealth and beyond who willingly made comments and recommendations that have been useful.

We are particularly delighted that events in South Africa in 1994 enabled us to include a submission from that country.

To The Commonwealth of Learning who had the faith to support this work, in particular Dr. Dennis Irvine and Mr. John Steward, who provided assistance, support and direction in times of need, we are indeed grateful. Without the help of the Commonwealth of Learning and its staff the idea of the reader would not have become a reality.

efw
nj

PREFACE

The growth of distance learning and distance education systems around the world presents many new and exciting challenges for library and information providers. Enabling distance learners to have ready access to library and information services gives rise to a variety of concerns, issues, responses and developments making the provision of these services quite unique.

The purpose of this reader is to provide its audience with an opportunity to become acquainted with distance librarianship as it is operated in a number of countries around the Commonwealth. It does not aim to be comprehensive in coverage. Rather, its intent is to reduce the information gap that currently exists in this sector of the profession as practised in the Commonwealth. Contributors include library and distance educators, practising distance librarians, university and library administrators. They offer an abundance of opinions and describe a variety of practices, operations and circumstances.

The selection of articles was made on a call for papers basis. Invitations were sent to librarians and university administrators at institutions listed in the 1994-95 Association of Commonwealth Universities Yearbook. In addition, librarians personally known to the editors were also specially invited to submit articles. The invitation to South Africa was made as soon as the situation made such an overture possible and we are pleased to be able to include an article from that country. The response rate was encouragingly high, approximately 70%. All of the articles received were accepted. However, in order to ensure uniformity of presentation the editorial process was lengthy.

The order of presentation is as follows: contributions of a general nature, reports on research studies and finally, country or region specific articles.

We believe that library school students, library educators and administrators, distance librarians and educators as well as distance education administrators and planners will find this reader of considerable value. It is intended to serve as a source of information on practices as they exist and does not pretend to be a textbook or treatise on the principles of distance librarianship. It is our fervent hope that this reader will achieve its basic goal and that it will introduce persons to and stimulate them to think about a professional specialisation which we ourselves view with great passion.

efw
nj

FOREWORD

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an international organisation which functions as a technical and professional agency to foster and support the use of distance education methodologies as an effective and versatile means of addressing the problems of human resource development within the Commonwealth. Since its inception in 1988 COL has employed a number of strategies to encourage countries, educational institutions and professional associations to adopt alternative and more flexible approaches to the delivery of education and training. These approaches have ranged in complexity from the use of self-instructional print-based materials only to the delivery of courses and programmes through videoconferencing. The underlying factor governing all of this has been the recognition of the need to assist institutions to acquire the capability to develop and deliver relevant courses and programmes by distance.

One of the many functions of COL, as contained in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under which it was established, is to undertake and support evaluation and applied research in distance education. This aspect of COL's mandate has been interpreted broadly. It has included, for instance, studies on the role and expansion of distance education at the University of the South Pacific (1990) and the University of the West Indies (1991). These have focussed on issues of policy and in each case have provided a framework for the further development of delivery of distance education programmes within the institutions. COL has also commissioned work on the environment and environmental education, leading to the development of a curriculum guide and related documents in support of in-service primary teacher education. On a smaller scale it has investigated barriers faced by Pacific women in distance education, surveyed critically the use of radio as an educational medium in the Caribbean, and commissioned a study on library services to distance learners. This last study was undertaken by Ms. E. Watson, Librarian at the Learning Resource Centre of The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill campus, and one of the editors of this volume.

The study on library services to distance learners also impinges on another important function mandated for COL in the MOU. This is to assist in the development of local support services to students. Many institutions and organisations in the Commonwealth now offer courses and programmes by distance, and the number is increasing rapidly year by year. A common concern in delivering such services and programmes is the provision of adequate and appropriate services to support the students. Very often however, the main focus, especially in developing countries, has tended to be improving the study skills of students and ensuring that they have access to adequate tutorial support and counselling. However there is a growing recognition that the provision of good library services is a crucial factor in determining the quality of distance education, particularly in the case of programmes at the top levels of higher education.

For students remote from the source of instruction, providing adequate library services presents an enormous challenge for institutions in developing countries. Models derived from institutions in the more industrialised countries may not be relevant since, to give one example, these may be premised on the existence of library facilities in educational institutions or open to the public throughout the country to which students can have free and easy access. If institutions in developing countries are to be able to satisfy the library needs of their students, they need to be able to examine a variety of models in order to select what is more relevant, appropriate and affordable.

It is considerations of this kind which prompted COL to respond favourably to a request from Ms. E. Watson for support to compile and publish, in association with Dr. N. Jagannathan of the Indira Gandhi National Open University, a reader on library services to distance learners. The reader is a logical outgrowth of the 1992 study by Ms. Watson and provides a basis for enabling COL to determine how best it can provide support to help institutions which need to make better and more extensive library services available to their distance students. Both editors have had to deal with the practicalities of providing library services for major educational institutions with a commitment to distance education programmes, and this has helped considerably to ensure that the case studies in the reader are firmly rooted in practical reality.

COL welcomes the reader as a very valuable addition to its range of publications, and as a useful instrument for increasing awareness about the need for, and critical importance of, having good library services in institutions and organisations which make use of distance education methodologies. We congratulate the editors on assembling such a distinguished team of contributors and on producing such a relevant and timely publication, and we acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of the authors of the various papers. Finally, we commend the reader to all who, like us, feel that we cannot continue to place library services at the margins of distance education.

The Commonwealth of Learning

INTRODUCTION

Michael Wooliscroft

Over recent years, there have been very significant developments in distance teaching globally. Yet distance teachers and administrators have not often paid enough regard to the resource consequences of their programmes, and the role that librarians can play to reduce the level of frustration students experience. This contribution comes through their provision of quality services of relevant information in a timely fashion.

Distance education is sometimes viewed, if not as a cheap, then certainly as an economical means of providing education for core education programmes, professional courses and continuing education. However, it appears cheaper because many administrators are not costing into their programmes the adequate provision of support services, especially library services, which will enable students to obtain best value from their distance programmes.

But librarians cannot work alone to achieve the results that are required. It is essential that librarians become integral members of teams which include teachers and distance administrators and, increasingly, people with the technical skills to assist in the transmission of both instructional and support materials. There is a need for librarians to become more proactive and more assertive within their institutions, thus ensuring that students' needs are optimised thereby making the learning experience not only satisfying but extending.

Many of the systems used in the education of on-campus students are not appropriate methodologies to reach distance learners. On the other hand a number of strategies used to enhance distance students' experiences can also be used to benefit on-campus students. By improving library provision for distance students, librarians will also automatically improve services to on-campus students, a point made by Bobb-Semple *et al.* The existence of a campus network which embraces all of an institution's students is an important provision. Its library's catalogues and databases will thus automatically embrace both on- and off-campus students. Distance students will consequently have essentially the same services available for on-campus learners.

Increasingly important for libraries is how to provide distance students with adequate instruction in the use of libraries, materials and other information sources needed to support their course work and learning needs. As relevant information will be found in a growing variety of formats, the concept of "information literacy" gains considerable and widespread importance.

A challenge which is increasing in importance for libraries is how to provide distance students with adequate instruction in the use of libraries and materials available to support their learning objectives. An added challenge is how to make relevant information that is found in a growing variety of formats user-friendly and accessible. Thus the concept of information literacy is as important to off-campus learning as it is for on-campus programmes.

Librarians, in partnership with teaching staff, have a responsibility to identify distance students who may be information starved, relying solely on the packaged and pre-packaged materials sent to them by course administrators and tutors. Total reliance on prescribed and predetermined information inhibits the development of life-long learning skills. These are increasingly being recognised as essential to enable people to reach their potential. Interestingly, research reported by Cavanagh and Tucker shows that such packaged information may stimulate demand for further information.

Librarians attempting to provide services to distance students need to aim to:

- be integral members of course planning and implementing groups;
- develop programmes in information literacy (no matter how simple the technology used);
- actively market their services;
- distribute guides to services and subject information sources;
- use the fastest available means of transmitting materials;
- provide phone or E-mail services where possible to receive enquiries; and to
- provide dial-in access to library catalogues and other databases available on campus.

It is clear that the achievement of these goals will depend on the degree of sophistication and level of resources in the country and institution providing the services. Nevertheless, they are key goals. With lesser student numbers and few resources it may be possible to make contractual relationships so that students can access other libraries with relevant materials. Tanzania has adopted this solution because of its decision not to develop a library at its open university in its initial years.

Whatever the situation, the determining criterion in any service that is offered should be empowering the distance student to take command of her or his learning consistent with the principle of "guided self-instruction". Thus, it is appropriate to ask during the development of library services to distance learners "how can distance students get the best service, or how can distance learners be provided with the best service from existing resources?" The answer, in most cases, would be to package services which would also be an excellent offer for on-campus users. But this approach cannot satisfy the ultimate goal to provide quality library and information services to distance learners. Nor can it be used on its own to satisfy the changing and changed processes and modalities used to provide information and support learning.

Much of the present literature on library services for distance learners is devoted to countries or places which have sophisticated infrastructural supports that accommodate the use of technology to bridge distances of various kinds. While there is no doubt that these will further develop and spread around the globe, many Commonwealth countries do not have these facilities in place. This reader includes articles spanning the spectrum of Commonwealth experiences in distance education and distance librarianship. It goes from situations where libraries are incredibly constrained in their resources, to some where distance students do not have access to electricity, to others which are literature resource rich countries as well as those where students have immediate access to computers and modems which connect them admirably to the networks of their teaching institution and beyond.

Distance librarianship is placed in context by Watson, of the Learning Resource Centre of The University of the West Indies, (UWI), Barbados, who in her very sound paper *Distance librarianship: a perspective* provides a rich feast. It details a consideration of the elements of distance education, the librarian's role in assisting optimal educational outcomes from such programmes and a teasing out of the issues related to distance librarianship, both in relation to traditional on-site library services and in relation to issues raised by distance teaching specifically. Her use of the term *information disenfranchisement* pulls no punches and alerts the reader to the seriousness of not providing appropriately for those learning at a distance. Also hitting hard is her quote from Meacham and Zubir (1992) that *distance education has in some ways been more of a model of cultural imperialism than a model of appropriate development.* Watson emphasises the importance of institutions having strong philosophical and mission statements relating to distance library services, being convinced that they are necessary prerequisites to vibrant quality services.

As vital as the library's *position of strength* is in an institution, it is something which can never and should not be taken for granted. It is a status that is *acquired through perseverance, dependability, making one and one's services indispensable, anticipating developments and changes thus placing the library and its services in a proactive relationship rather than occupying a reactive and defensive status.* These are wise words for those managing library services for distance or internal students. She concludes by reiterating her plea for schools and departments of library education to include in their courses issues related to distance library services and throws down a gauntlet to those working in distance librarianship to keep at the cutting edge in order that their students are provided with optimal services.

In recent years there have been a number of research attempts to find out more about the needs of distance students. This reader on distance librarianship includes research reports as well as descriptive accounts of experiences on general issues to specific topics from around the Commonwealth.

A European perspective is presented by Brophy, Goodall and Wynne in an overview of the increasing importance of tertiary distance education. They describe a programme of research and development into the delivery of library services to distance users conducted by the University of Central Lancashire in the United Kingdom, through its Centre for Research in Library and Information Management. The authors recognise that the role of libraries has received little attention from those developing new methods of educational delivery. Research is still proceeding into the way in which students use libraries. Already evident is that students use a very wide range of sources and that their parent university library service is only one of many.

Their research notes that there are few formal mechanisms to enable libraries to contribute significantly to the needs of the students. Much of the effectiveness of the libraries surveyed depended on the strength of the informal networks of individual librarians. This article notes that librarians are not often enough involved with proposals at a sufficiently early stage. Also contended is that the contribution that librarians can offer is not taken seriously enough by teaching staff. This point is also taken up by a number of other contributors including Jenkins, Slade, Solomon and Watson who urge that a more proactive stance is needed by librarians to press the case for their involvement at early stages of distance programme planning.

Brophy, Goodall and Wynne describe the BIBDEL Project - *Libraries without walls: the delivery of library services to distance users* which began in March 1994. BIBDEL involves three university libraries working together to explore delivery of library and information services "at a distance" through the use of IT (information technology). The project focuses on three principal issues – catalogue access, enquiries and related library and information management issues. The authors note that improvements will occur through a clearer understanding of users' needs and their information-seeking behaviour. The adoption of novel approaches, especially IT, to obviate problems is recommended. The article does note however, that older methods will have to continue to be employed alongside the new to find a balance of service which meets needs most effectively.

The second article describing research in the field is written by Slade of The University of Victoria in Canada. He describes a joint survey of their off-campus students by six universities in Western Canada. The survey showed that the students surveyed are partly self-sufficient through using local resources, not only library collections but also through the purchase of books from local booksellers. The author notes that "only 25%" of the distance students surveyed report having access to both a computer and a modem for remote dial-in to their university library catalogue. (In less developed countries, this figure would be close to zero.) The relative affluence of this society does not make these findings surprising. Prompt turnaround time was judged to be the most important service requirement. The need for more bibliographic instruction was also identified. The survey indicated that the majority of students were satisfied with the outreach services that they were receiving.

The 1993 Canadian Library Association *Guidelines for Library Support of Distance Learning in Canada* is mentioned in this article as are the two professional associations for librarians whose principal clients are distance users. Slade notes that Canadian universities have a long way to go in providing distance learners with remote access to electronic resources. The inadequate contact between librarians and teaching staff which leads to student frustration is also commented on. For example, a recommended text which is not available, especially an out-of-print title, can cause unnecessary student distress. Also stressed is the need for more library-oriented instructional materials for distance students.

Some Australian research is reported by Appleton, writing on Central Queensland University's research undertaken in 1992 into the needs of remote postgraduate distance education students. A number of issues emerged from this experiment with the delivery of electronic library services to a small group. These include a common pattern of lack of awareness of library services available, low use even when they were aware, and the use of other local libraries even when they were not satisfactory. The investigation into the innovative use of IT to provide electronic access to the delivery of information shows the potential of that technology for distance learners. This increasingly important issue is also explored in depth by Van Dyk.

Providing research findings from a Third World perspective is an article by Steele of the UWI in Grenada. Her research looks at a number of issues affecting library and information services from the perspective of students living in four Caribbean islands. Generally, students were not satisfied with the level of library and information services support that they were getting. The finding that students were generally prepared to pay an additional fee if they could be assured of an improved service is particularly interesting given that it emanates from a region that is not economically well developed. However, the students did apply a proviso. They would only be prepared to pay such a sum if the money went directly to the local facility rather than into the corporate purse for subsequent dispersal. Additional comment on Steele's paper is included with the analysis of the other Caribbean contributions.

The articles examined above provide analysis on research-based data on distance library services from the views of students, library professionals, distance administrators and distance teaching institutions.

The importance of library services for distance learning is further strengthened by the contribution of a distance education consultant. In her article, Jenkins stresses the importance of librarians as key members of course development teams from an early stage and emphasises the need for team members to be realistic in their prescriptions or suggestions for reading to accompany courses. She also stresses the importance of wide reading beyond the course text as an essential component of the learning process. This really is a core need, which is either implicitly or explicitly expressed in most of the papers in this reader. This is a crucial support that libraries and librarians must give to distance learners.

Barriers to service in the Third World is the focus of Watson's second paper. While the factors cited are based on the Anglophone Caribbean, many of the barriers are universal in their occurrence. These include: the perception that distance learners do not need library services; that distance educators can satisfy all the learner materials needs that distance learners have and that the invisible nature of this corps of students facilitates a disregard of their library and information needs. Other issues include inadequate or non-existent funding, poor national library systems and services, the need for appropriate training of all levels of library and information personnel in distance services and an institutional unwillingness to award the serious consideration to the issue that it needs and deserves. The barriers cited are applicable to large and small nations, large land masses or small island states, developed or underdeveloped societies, single- or dual-mode institutions as well as to library providers and distance educators, regardless of their habitat.

Supporting the research-based contributions and articles of a general nature are several general overviews of how library service support is given to distance education programmes in various Commonwealth countries or at various sites within individual countries. These articles are based on empirical evidence, rather than research-based findings.

Cavanagh and Tucker write of the situation at the relatively resource rich, information technology sophisticated and experienced Deakin University in Australia where library services to distance students have been offered since 1978. The authors are conscious of the considerable difference between their situation and that of developing nations. They stress the need for a partnership between teaching staff, distance students and librarians. The active promotion of library services is also recommended. Advocates for the compilation of readers of essential articles rather than *ad hoc* copying, they cite research showing that such readers stimulate the use of libraries. Also discussed is the role of libraries in the provision of text books and of librarians in dealing with subject requests.

Another Australian view is offered by Meacham and Macpherson who describe the distance education library services provided by Charles Sturt University (CSU). CSU is a three-campus university, with over half of its 14,000 students studying at a distance. Reciprocal borrowing is widely, but not always, available. Key issues are identified as equity, efficiency and accessibility, the information rich and poor, copyright, costs and benefits, optimising IT and the criteria for its effectiveness.

Van Dyk, also writing from Australia, sets the general scene before focussing on the role IT can play in "overcoming the tyranny of distance" and providing open access. Recent government reports pertaining to tertiary education generally and distance education in particular are discussed. The Australian *Guidelines for Library Services to External Students* (1982) is regarded as presenting ideal standards. Reciprocal agreements between libraries, inter- and intra-state, are in existence but more is required. The Open Learning Library and Information Services (OLLIS) (1993) agency is the library support equivalent of the Open Learning Agency of Australia (OLAA), also established in the early 1990s. Just as OLAA is an educational broker, OLLIS performs a complementary role. OLLIS is a centralised administrative unit which coordinates an Australia-wide Open Learning Library network based on a voucher scheme. The vouchers help students to pay for a variety of library services and other costs associated with accessing those services. The goal is to minimise the barriers to the availability of library services. Some CD-ROM services are networked but these can increase frustration when listed material cannot be accessed in a timely fashion.

Van Dyk also discusses the potential of electronic document delivery but acknowledges the problems associated with copyright. The author notes that Open Learning Electronic Support Services (OLESS) are currently being developed by OLAA in conjunction with the Open Learning Technology Corporation. OLESS is designed to eliminate geographical or institutional fragmentation by creating a national technologically based information network. The author stresses the need for information literacy and in particular an electronic training programme. She also emphasises the need for negotiation and consultation between all stakeholders in designing and implementing electronically based information services for distance students. Equity of access is a principle that demands that distance students should have the same degree of information access as on-campus students. In common with Solomon, the author sees that electronic services complemented by established traditional services are very important. Van Dyk is convinced that an institution that employs IT initiatives to better support distance education will have important strategic advantages over those institutions less adventurous.

New Zealand, has been described as having *one of the most comprehensive, experienced and effective systems* [of distance education] *in the world* (Tate, quoted in Solomon). Solomon accepts this pronouncement. She states, however, that against this achievement the latest developments in information technology have had little impact on library services provided for distance students. After giving a brief overview of distance education in New Zealand, she describes the situation prevailing at the University of Otago. She identifies key issues as response time, information literacy and proactive coordination between teaching and library staff in course design and presentation as being important to the delivery of quality distance library services. Conceded are the potential advantages that distance students may have as a result of library staff doing rather more of their information searching for them than they would be prepared to do for internal students. Seen as problems are time delays, accessibility, copying, reserve materials and the possible development of an information dependency syndrome among distance students. She states that there is a need for students to develop a wide range of information searching and retrieval skills and concludes by averring that a variety of technologies is needed to provide services appropriate to the varying needs of distance education students. Solomon also refers, with approval, to the American Library Association's College and Research Libraries Section Guidelines for Extended Library Services.

Bockett, Marsden and Pitchforth write of the situation at Massey University in New Zealand where the majority of their extramural/distance students are mature persons, many studying to upgrade their qualifications, or preparing for new occupations without leaving their present jobs – patterns evident in distance programmes worldwide. A growing percentage of Massey's students live in centres where other universities are established. Massey's library services are mainly postal, aiming to give services "as nearly equivalent as possible" to those enjoyed by internal students. This article focusses on a number of management issues, communication concerns, the need for a marketing strategy, coping with overseas students (mostly New Zealanders abroad), centralised versus networked services, collection issues, duplication policies, financial resources, ethical issues relating to subject searches and the need for a closer liaison between teaching staff and librarians.

Contrasting sharply with the experiences of developed countries in the Commonwealth are the reports presented from less affluent member countries. The enormous problems of providing distance education in India are detailed by Jagannathan. Her article sets the scene of the general problems of providing tertiary education in India. The size of the country, its extremely large population and the number of persons wishing to access education makes distance learning an appropriate strategy. In addition to correspondence directorates and state distance universities, at the national level is the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). This article also alludes to the possibility of additional distance teaching universities being established.

Jagannathan describes the IGNOU system that was set up to serve the needs of a population of 844 million with students located across the entire Union of India. In addition to the headquarters unit located at Maidan Garhi, at the time of writing, there are 16 regional centres and 216 study centres to cope with over 3 million registered students living across a large country. There are enormous difficulties resulting from considerable under-resourcing. The author outlines a survey conducted to discover the requirements of library users. She calls for the educational role of public libraries and the public role of academic libraries to be recognised in an effort to provide freer access to all existing libraries. This is a view echoed to some extent by Cavanagh and Tucker in their suggestion of an open ticket system for all libraries in Australia.

Kanjilal, also of IGNOU, stresses the need for IT to be utilised for instructional purposes, document delivery and access to library catalogues. Lamented is the present state of resourcing which is "at a nascent stage". IGNOU is being seen as a leader in the development of distance services in India but clearly this will only be achieved with sufficient resourcing conscientiously applied.

An Indian submission that takes a different path is that of Satyanarayana from IGNOU. This paper discusses at some length the basic features of distance education and then describes the experience of the IGNOU in launching and conducting the Bachelor and Master degrees in Library and Information Science. Particular elements such as objectives and scope, course design and programme structure, programme delivery and support, and evaluation are reported on.

Four writers provide perspectives from and of the African continent. John writes of the situation relating to library services to secondary level distance students in English-speaking Africa (the only paper in this reader to do so) and states that *there is hardly any distance teaching institution in Africa that is not modelled on one in existence outside the continent, and more often than not, one in operation in the developed world.* In spite of this he notes that African countries have failed to apply the practice of such models as regards support services and tells of the range of support available to distance students in Australia and Canada such as face-to-face tuition, broadcast media, counselling and electronic communications facilities in addition to access to libraries. He writes of the role of the study centres most of which are just that, literally places for study rather than as places where some counselling is available, such as Jagannathan notes is the practice in India. John also writes of the absence of libraries in many programmes and the need for greater resourcing brought about by stronger political commitment. He closes with a note of hope by writing about the facilitating role that international agencies are playing in the development of distance learning in Africa.

Behrens and Grobler outline the situation at the University of South Africa (Unisa). As one of the oldest and largest distance teaching institutions in the world Unisa's experience is valuable. Unisa attempts to provide library services to its over 126,000 students from undergraduate to doctoral levels. Many of the students are found to lack library skills. Unisa's programme is designed to provide a measure of information literacy in a situation where the huge gaps between rich and poor are also evidenced in all aspects of education, including library and information services. A study collection provides course books and supplementary reading for undergraduate programmes and courses. Library services for postgraduate students are much more sophisticated and are provided by subject librarians who use a number of strategies to keep in touch with their students. One of the observations made by these two writers is that the level of library use and information skill proficiency of students is a direct correlation with the library skills expectancy of the course lecturer.

Another African approach discussed in this reader is Kamau's contribution on Kenya. Writing on the support services for Bachelor in Education distance learners' degree programme at the University of Nairobi, she focusses particularly on the elements requiring support services. She indicates what services should be available and then describes the support services themselves. The relative poverty inhibits (as it so often does elsewhere) the proper stocking of libraries to support real needs.

An African experience, in this case quite a radical one, is described by Mmari, Vice-Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania. He writes of his institution's decision not to establish a university library, at least initially, but rather to build on the existing stock of other libraries both public and private. The Tanzania Library Service Board, with its 13 regional libraries, 8 district libraries and 2 divisional libraries, fulfils a pivotal role in this arrangement. Contractual agreements with the University of Dar es Salaam Library and other libraries are anticipated but were not in place at the time of writing.

Providing experiences of distance librarianship in small states are the contributions from the Caribbean. Small states have a number of features that are intrinsically unique. The four papers from this region provide a number of interesting and useful insights.

Technical-vocational distance education offered by the College of Arts, Sciences and Technology (CAST) in Jamaica is described by Bobb-Semple. He indicates the role that effective library services can play in contributing to equity between on-campus and off-campus programmes. The range of services and technologies employed is covered as is the need to provide appropriately for each team from an early stage. Also described is the CAST Distance Teaching Pilot Project. The plans for an Open Learning Centre which, in addition to supporting distance teaching, will facilitate independent study and self-directed learning are discussed.

Another view of distance librarianship in the Commonwealth Caribbean is presented by de Four of Trinidad and Tobago. Examining the UWI's Development Plan to the year 2000 she notes the expressed goal to offer expanded services to distance learners. The University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Enterprise (formerly Experiment) (UWIDITE) an interactive audio teleconferencing system, is seen as being an important delivery strategy. Its specific use for library and information services still needs articulation. The opportunities to use audio conferencing for information purposes are considerable.

The application of technology to education and learning is stated to be one of the critical factors in reforming tertiary education. De Four also discusses the feasibility of using electronic means of improving library support and a number of the barriers that need to be overcome.

In addition to reporting on her research findings, Steele of Grenada confirms that the UWI is beginning a major thrust for the further development of its distance programmes. She highlights the need for library support at the University Centre libraries located in the Non-Campus Countries served by the UWI. In common with other regions, Steele notes that the average distance student is a mature, experienced individual in the middle or upper levels of the civil service or private sector. She emphasises that there is an absolute need for more adequate information resourcing for all aspects of distance education support.

Watson's trans-Caribbean paper has already been critiqued. However, when read in conjunction with the de Four, Bobb-Semple and Steele submissions, these papers provide an excellent overview of the positive and negative aspects of distance librarianship in the Commonwealth Caribbean at the time of writing. By extension they also provide useful information on distance librarianship in the Third World – particularly its small states.

There are major challenges for the proper development of library services in support of distance students. Among them, two seem to be absolutely signal for distance students to be treated equitably with on-campus students. One is the role of librarians in the cadre of professions charged with the delivery of a distance programme or course. Librarians must become key members of course planning and implementation teams along with teaching staff and technical providers where sophisticated networks exist. Associated with this is the need for any library service involved in distance programmes to be adequately supported in terms of resources required for adequate services and proper development.

The other challenge is that of using the appropriate technology. The papers in this reader outline a number of disparate situations from the relatively resource rich and sophisticated systems to disadvantaged and underdeveloped units. Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have examples of institutions taking advantage of new technology to support their students well in both instructional and support ways. On the other hand countries such as India and some in Africa and the Caribbean see the potential of the latest developments in IT but cannot use them because of the resources required and the attendant problems that large numbers of students in a wide variety of circumstances create. And then there are other areas in developing countries where some students are living and working away from a ready source of electrical supply and where IT has understandably yet to make an impact.

My belief is that many institutions of learning, from secondary level up, will be required to become proficient in distance learning modes of delivery within the next few years. Before the end of this decade, electronic networking will become pervasive over much of the world. Satellite and cable broadcasting will enable a multiplicity of delivery channels to serve homes and places of work. These communication possibilities will be seized upon by educationalists. Librarians should and must be the mirror image of the work of educators in this domain. The growth of demand for further and continuing education programmes and the increasing awareness of the benefits of life-long learning will influence the demand for distance programmes. This should result in the flourishing of demand for library services from distance learners. In the meantime, librarians and distance students and their teachers around the globe are challenged by working in a variety of situations, many of them not having an early promise of advanced technological solutions to assist them. Several of the authors represented in this reader pay attention to those principles which can guide access to relevant materials in a variety of situations.

Given the dispersed nature of much of the Commonwealth, the many island nations, and those larger countries where the main centres of population are limited to small pockets or narrow strips, it seems especially appropriate to focus this reader on library services to distance students in the Commonwealth.

I believe that this reader will prove very useful in outlining the range of solutions to providing library services to distance students in a number of Commonwealth situations. The reader identifies the key issues involved in the provision of such services, some common and specific problems and a variety of solutions. The reader also indicates ways in which new technologies can assist immeasurably in reducing barriers to access. The reader reduces a gap in the literature. And finally, it is my view that this reader serves as another conduit to bond the members of the Commonwealth, particularly those who belong to the Commonwealth Library Association (COMLA) family of which I have the honour of being Immediate Past President.

The editors, Ms. Elizabeth Watson and Dr. Neela Jagannathan, are to be warmly thanked for their inspiration, without which this volume would not have appeared. The support of The Commonwealth of Learning is most certainly acknowledged with gratitude.

DISTANCE LIBRARIANSHIP: A PERSPECTIVE

Elizabeth F. Watson

INTRODUCTION

The importance of library services to distance learning is comprehensively articulated by Burge, Snow and Howard (1988) when they state that *poor library services will undermine the potential impact and effectiveness of distance education.* Monroe (1975) looking at the issue from another angle, at an earlier period, states that *the open university sets a new context for library service for both academic and public libraries.* Cavanagh (1994) stresses the need to examine this most important issue fully. Library services to distance learners – or distance librarianship, which such services can be called – is therefore unquestionably an important aspect of distance education. The development of a specialist area in librarianship depends on the emergence and/or existence of a critical mass of people or things which have a number of characteristics that serve to distinguish them from other library users, materials or services. Library and information services to those who learn at a distance have several characteristics that are sufficiently unique and differentiated to enable library services to distance learners to be classified as a specialty in its own right. Distance librarianship refers to the professional and non-professional activities, procedures, services and practices that provide quality library and information services to all those who learn at a distance – regardless of the level of their education programme.

Distance librarianship is inextricably linked with the growth of distance education systems around the world. The phenomenal pan-global growth of modern systems of providing education via distance dictates that librarians and other information providers re-examine the processes and procedures that are used or not used to provide their services to distance students. Distance learning, as a means of accessing education, has been in existence for a considerable period of time. What is new is the systemization, organisation, innovation, pedagogy and in particular the mix of student support services which are associated with modern day distance education. Of particular note is the high degree of technology-dependent services which abound – particularly in developed countries. As a consequence of the development, expansion and maturation of distance education systems, the number of students using this system to attain their educational aspirations has grown considerably. This has created in its wake a new cadre/cohort of persons with library and information needs – the distance learner. The library and information needs of distance students do not differ in principle from the needs of their on-campus peers. What differs are the modalities that information providers can and must use to reach these students so that they are not disenfranchised or disadvantaged in accessing the information that they need to support their learning goals and objectives.

The very nature of distance education raises a range of concerns such as equity, parity and quality of distance programmes vis-à-vis intramural programmes. Access to quality information sources is a *sine qua non* of face-to-face programmes of merit. Counterpart services are not the norm of most distance education systems. To appreciate the quintessence of distance librarianship and to place it in its proper perspective, an understanding of distance education by library providers and library educators is imperative. This understanding will also assist practitioners to realise the role that librarianship can and must play in distance education.

In keeping with the scope of this reader, this article focusses on the experiences, needs, demands, requirements, responses and practice of distance librarianship in the Commonwealth. These issues will be examined under the following broad headings: Distance Education; Distance Learners; Third World Issues and Concerns; Technology in Distance Librarianship; The Literature of Distance Librarianship; Distance Librarianship; Fee or Free?; Networking; Marketing and Public Relations and Education for Distance Librarianship. Extra-Commonwealth experiences will be cited where necessary or appropriate.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education enables individuals who, for domestic, national, economic or other reasons, are unable or unwilling to pursue their educational goals through conventional methods or face-to-face learning. Holmberg (1986) presents the issue this way: *basic arguments in favour of distance education voiced from the very beginning are thus the opportunities opened to adults to learn anywhere and at any time suitable to them beside their other commitments, to upgrade their competence and generally to educate themselves without having to adapt themselves to the convenience of others.* Holmberg further describes distance education as including ... *the various forms of study at all levels which are not under the continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organization.* Distance education therefore provides an element of freedom in accessing education that conventional systems seldom entertain. Remoteness and distance are the predominant and constant features of distance education. The existence of a physical divide creates pervasive effects on the teaching/learning system. Differing time schedules between students is another of the overriding concerns that distance educators need to address.

Definitions of distance education abound in the writings on or about distance education. These include off-campus learning, external studies, individualised learning, home study, challenge programmes, correspondence study, open learning and independent study *inter alia* (Carty, 1991; Crocker, 1982; Holmberg, 1986). Holmberg, an esteemed writer on distance education himself, laments the absence of a unified and uniform description for distance education. A critical examination of the many terms used reveals the following as a constant characteristic: separation – distant or remote in time and place between the teaching institution, its tutors and students. For the purpose of this paper the following definition will be used: distance education is a system of learning whereby the students are separated in time and place from their tutors, their institution of instruction and from each other (Watson, 1992).

The growth of distance education has been occasioned by a number of factors. These include the phenomenal growth of the world's population leading to an unprecedented need or desire for education at all levels. Secondly, many persons wish to re-tool themselves to accommodate changes in the workplace or a desire for a career change. Thirdly, there may be the need or desire to effect a career change which requires an individual to acquire information, skills, aptitudes and attitudes that are new. Fourthly, the escalating costs of establishing conventional educational institutions has forced many governments to seek alternative means of providing education that is equitable in all respects to conventional education. One of the advantages of distance education is that large numbers of students provide economies of scale (in operations and activities) that conventional programmes do not afford. Thus, distance education becomes particularly attractive to those who have to fund educational activities. And fifthly, distance education countermands some of the negative effects that changes in residential location, either under voluntary or forced circumstances, may create or dictate on an educational programme.

The pursuit of education through distance programmes was, in its initial years, restricted to rural dwellers or persons who lived some distance away from urban areas or the other places of learning. Radford's (1982) comment that *a large number of external students* [in present day distance education programmes] *are not resident in geographically remote areas. Rather they live in the capital cities or other major* *centres in which there are located one or more tertiary institutions* is an important statement. Distance education has become, in its own right, an important modality to access education, and this situation is supported by many writers including Burge, Snow and Howard (1988).

This important development must be noted, that is the shift in location of many distance learners. Whilst previously distance learners lived in rural, remote or isolated locations, now some are urban dwellers, sometimes residing in the same household as other distance learners - pursuing similar or different courses. Sometimes they even live in the same town or city as the distance teaching institution, but the students find that a distance learning programme suits their personal circumstances better.

Strong student support systems are the distinguishing feature between early distance education programmes and modern distance education systems. The development of these support systems is rooted in a positive attempt to reduce the perception that distance education is a second-rate educational experience and also an attempt on the part of the educational institution to enhance the students' opportunity of success in their programme of study. Further, strong student support services redress, to some extent, the perception that distance education is an inferior option to traditional programmes.

Whilst positive progress has been made in most segments of the support chain for distance learners, the weak link is the availability of library and information services that compare favourably with such services in conventional systems. The importance of library and information services in the conventional educational system is well documented and accepted. Indeed, the availability of adequate information to support a course is a requirement of most traditional institutions and often it is mandated in developed societies. Frequently the review and evaluation process at such institutions include an examination of the availability, quality and accessibility of information and library services to support the tutors and students of the programmes offered.

The transference of the principle of quality library services for distance education is the ultimate goal of distance librarianship. A brief historical review of what has occurred in the area of distance education places the discipline in context.

Historical review

Shale and Garrison (1990) without providing a commencement date, state that Australia and New Zealand have *a long and venerable tradition of distance education in the form of "external studies"*. Holmberg (1986) informs us that tertiary level distance education in Australia can be traced to 1911 and Rayner (1949), quoted in Holmberg, traces primary and secondary level distance education in that country to the 1920s. The English correspondence courses or home study programmes dating from Pitman's 1840 offer to teach shorthand, combined with a study of the Scriptures, is the precursor of the formalization of distance education in that country which pinnacled when the British Open University (OU) was established in 1969.

A cursory review of the history of distance education in other areas of the Commonwealth indicates its importance, particularly for non-metropole dwellers. The University of London, through its external degree programme established in 1858, was an important tertiary level education institution for many persons, particularly in the Third World and recently independent countries of the Commonwealth. The Universities of London and Cambridge, the Associated Examining Board and the City and Guilds of London Institute also allowed persons to register as external candidates for their examinations. Institutions such as Wolsey Hall, as a commercial enterprise, provided correspondence courses, supplemented by booklets and other support materials all of which were an important source of information germane to their studies. For some students, the products of such organisations were the only source of pertinent information, as public libraries were either non-existent or extremely under-developed and the accrediting institution offered either very limited or no library and information support services. Although commercial interests and economic gain were the propelling forces of these bodies, they filled a void in an existing market.

In the post World War II period, British professional associations were particularly active as providers of professional training via distance education. The Chartered Association of Certified Accountants; and the Library Association of Great Britain are examples of associations who were proactive in providing learning opportunities at a distance.

Research indicates that distance education in the United States dates from the middle of the last century and that European activities in distance education have a history that is comparable (Holmberg, 1986).

Distance education systems and programmes – modern developments

The changes that have occurred in many aspects of distance education over the last 20 years have been significant. These include the trans-global establishment of dedicated distance teaching institutions: e.g. the British Open University; the Indira Gandhi National Open University (India); the University of South Africa; the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand and Athabasca University. In addition, many conventional institutions have diversified their teaching delivery strategies to include distance education as an option for learning purposes. These include Deakin University (Australia); The University of Otago and Massey University (New Zealand); The University of the South Pacific; The University of the West Indies; The University of Nairobi (Kenya); The University of Victoria (Canada) and the Brunel University (England). The internationalisation of distance education programmes blurs geographical and political boundaries.

Developments in distance education in one country are noted and affect the activities and approaches in other countries and institutions. Additionally, experience has shown that well developed distance programmes impact on the work of similar institutions as well as upon conventional programmes. Shale and Garrison's (1990) summation of the effect of distance education is illustrative. They state that *it is the rare educational institution that has not been touched by distance education in one way or another these days, either on the demand or supply side ... or by the delivery methods through which distance education is often better known.*

DUAL-MODE VS SINGLE-MODE INSTITUTIONS

Dual-mode refers to those institutions that offer both face-to-face tuition as well as distance programmes. Single-mode institutions are those that offer tuition and training via distance only. The difference between the two modes of institution presents disparate concerns in a number of areas, including library and information services.

Dual-mode institutions normally have an established and functional library as a part of their educational infrastructure. The range of services available in such systems is guided by the needs and levels of its face-to-face teaching activities and programmes. Some of these are serendipitously applied to the distance programmes. In most cases the library and information needs of distance students registered at these institutions are seldom given the same priority, attention or support which are accorded to those pursuing intramural programmes.

This situation often arises because of the way that the distance programmes are introduced within the institution. The programme may be outside the regular faculty/department/subject structures; or perhaps it is an experiment which does not demand the rigorous application of institutional procedures; or it may be on an experimental basis lacking the normal financial arrangements for support, including library and information services. The misperception of distance educators and administrators that distance learners do not have legitimate library and information needs may be the overriding factor. This position is curious however, as there are very few distance educators and administrators who do not come from a conventional education background. The absence of quality library and information services in such institutions would not be tolerated. Action or inaction by librarians themselves may also account for the absence of library and information services to distance learners. Many librarians have little understanding of distance education. Subsequently, they lack empathy with the needs of distance learners or the difficulties that they encounter to access their services. And finally, the library may not have been informed that its home institution is diversifying its delivery strategies to include distance education. Hence, ignorance of this institutional development leads to neglect and information disenfranchisement, a term used to connote any activity, intentional or unintentional, that denies persons access to information that is readily available or in the public domain.

The provision of adequate and quality library services in single-mode institutions encounters constraints of a different nature. For instance there is a perception that distance learners do not need library and information services. Similarly tutors and educators may assume that they can package **all** the information needs for such students. This approach is stultifying as it encourages rote learning and retards the development of critical life-serving information-seeking and -gathering skills. Access to library and information services also provides opportunities for a broadening of intellectual stimulation that prescribed documents and predetermined readings do not support. Also hindered is the acquisition of knowledge in tangential and related areas of interest to individual students which access to quality library and information services stimulates. Another constraint is the view that distance education is a cheaper way of providing education. Therefore any associated education support service that can be marginalised, downscaled, downgraded or ignored contributes to the cost-saving exercise. Presumed economies of scale can be overestimated and counterproductive.

The strength of single-mode institutions where library services are concerned is that they give library services greater consideration and support. This is mainly because single-mode institutions do not have conflicting constituencies, thus any effort made to provide library services impacts positively on the academic activities and services to students.

Finally, many distance education institutions – dual- and single-mode – assume that the library needs of their students will be supplied by some other body or institution. This is a serious dereliction of duty.

DISTANCE LEARNERS

Those who opt, or are forced by circumstances, to learn by distance belong to all age groups. The profile of a traditional distance learner is a mature, rural dweller who is forced by circumstance to pursue his learning needs via distance. Perhaps the best known distance student in the world is President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. President Mandela enrolled as a law student with Unisa, while incarcerated on Robben Island. The archives of Unisa include the written assignments of Mr. Mandela, who from all accounts was an exemplary student. Increasingly, the original profile of a distance student is changing to include urban and suburban dwellers, sometimes living in the same household and also younger persons who make a conscious decision to use this modality to satisfy their learning needs.

Distance learners in Australia and New Zealand are found from the primary level through to post-graduate programmes pursuing both formal and non-formal courses. In South Africa, distance education is being explored as a viable alternative to conventional methods of education in an attempt to upgrade the educational levels of the non-European nationals who previously were either unable to attend school, or whose education suffers from a number of deficiencies.

One of the strengths of distance education is that where there are very large numbers of students who have to be trained or re-trained quickly, distance education is an important means of responding to such needs (John, 1995). This makes distance education particularly attractive to the Third World.

THIRD WORLD ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Many Third World countries view distance education as a methodology that can be used to great advantage to provide ready access to all levels and types of education for their peoples. Additionally, the very nature of distance education, being neither time- nor place-bound makes trans-national registration possible thereby providing access to needed training that is not locally available.Access to and the availability of library and information services in the Third World raise a number of concerns that are inherently Third World. At the macro-level Meacham and Zubir (1992) make an important observation. They state that *distance education has in some ways been more a model of cultural imperialism than a model of* *appropriate development*. In particular, they refer to the fact that many modern distance education systems place great reliance on and assume the ready availability of technology and technology-driven systems and support devices. This assumption cannot be applied *carte blanche* to many areas in the Third World or even to some remote areas in developed and highly technological societies and countries. The Third World has several examples of inappropriate models and unsuitable technology-dependent devices that have been transferred and transplanted without concern for local conditions. Geography, infrastructural underdevelopment, technological underdevelopment, cultural differences, political machinations and many other invisible constraints all affect the success or failure of distance education developments in the Third World.

Many Third World countries are not print-based cultures. John (1995) posits the idea that oral methods are the principal means of communication. Consequently, print-based libraries and their services are not a familiar facet of the socio-cultural milieu for many Third World dwellers. In addition, the multiplicity of local languages and dialects in certain countries has substantial implications for the production of distance learning materials. India and South Africa provide telling illustrations since they are multilingual nations. In India, English and Hindi are the principal national languages spoken. In addition, many states within the union of India have their own *lingua franca* which affects the supremacy of both Hindi and English within a particular state. When IGNOU began to produce its teaching materials, the first language of choice was English. Hindi was used where necessary and increasingly materials were being produced in both languages. Now inhabitants of states that have their own language are pressing for materials to be available in their mother tongue. Given IGNOU's national mandate, such demands cannot be ignored or lightly considered.

South Africa has decreed that there are 11 national languages. At present Unisa materials are produced in English and Afrikaans only. A possible development would be a call to produce distance education materials in some of the other nine national languages. The administrative implications, at all levels, are considerable if the same material is to be produced in several languages.

Secondly, libraries where available are usually sited in urban or central locations far removed from most distance learners. Public transportation in many Third World countries is not well organised and private transport is a luxury for many Third World citizens. Consequently, the ease of access to a library in developed countries cannot be assumed in the Third World. Appavoo's (1985) remarks about the Canadian library experience are relevant to most Third World countries. These remarks – that the existence of a well developed public library system cannot be assumed and that where such systems exist that students will be well served – apply equally to library services throughout the Third World.

Thirdly, fiscal restraints affecting access to hard currency restrict the purchase of materials on the international market. India's developed publishing industry is a unique situation rather than the norm. Furthermore, the publishing industry in India is based predominantly on the production of a vast range of indigenous publications. Thus, the issue of access to non-national materials is still unanswered. The high cost of servicing a system of education in a Third World country causes information materials to be viewed as luxuries rather than necessities. In Barbados for example, after servicing the national debt, education has received the largest allocation in the annual budget for many years.

The cost of education, for many individuals, is often a charge that their personal finances are hard-pressed to meet. The ability to purchase principal, supplementary or other information materials for a personal library is usually outside the financial ability of many students in the Third World. As a result, the role and need for library services assume additional significance in such countries. The issue of access to collections of quality and services of merit assumes an import in the Third World that is inherently different from the First World experience.

Fourthly, information delivery in the developed world is increasingly becoming technology-driven. Access to technology, however low the level, is not readily available in all Third World countries. Basic communications such as telephones (reliable or otherwise); public electricity; running water and reliable postal services cannot be assumed to be always present or dependable. Thus, many communication devices used in the developed world to support distance education such as priority post; telephone; fax; toll-free telephone services; computers and computer-driven services such as CD-ROM, the Internet and E-mail are not available on a widespread basis in most Third World countries.

Fifthly, the moral codes, social patterns, religious beliefs and the political climates in some Third World countries introduce a concept of censorship that may be foreign to most librarians in the developed world. Sixthly, librarians in the Third World also have to be involved in a long-term process of educating the public on the role, importance and contribution of libraries to national development. Raising the consciousness of policy makers, politicians and others involved in the formulation of policies that affect libraries is an important task that all librarians in the Third World need to perform. The provision of water, buildings and other tangible and visible activities are vote getters. Providing the necessary support for a well-developed library service does not have the immediate cachet that schools, roads and electricity have (Partridge, 1988). The all-pervasive importance of library and information services to individual and national development has to be constantly stressed and demonstrated by librarians so that the profession is given the tools and support that it needs to provide quality and effective services to all. The verbal pronouncements on the importance of the information age must be supported by action and tangible support in the form of funding, personnel and physical resources to mention a few. Whilst the tasks of public relations and the marketing of library and information services are needed in the Third World, it is recognised that an improvement in the perception and image of the profession is a global challenge.

Seventhly, Third World librarians are unable to pursue easily post-professional training activities. Upgrading, continuing education and professional development opportunities are limited, thus creating within the profession the development of obsolescence in professional practices and some ossification in approach that is neither healthy nor entertained in developed countries.

And finally, the issue of wars and internal unrest or distress – of all types – affect distance education generally and the delivery and supply of library services in particular. While these phenomena are not restricted to the Third World, they have a particularly negative effect on such countries with respect to the availability and accessibility of educational opportunities.

The barriers that are unique to the Third World are also the very circumstances that spawn the development of distance education systems. The Third World is uniquely placed to use distance strategies to provide education and training. These two issues are important in the development of economies, societies and cultures. Any strategy that provides modalities to address development needs, satisfy concerns and reduce deficiencies should and must become a part of the educational structure of the country or nation concerned.

Cavanagh's (1994) statement that *the library most definitely has a role to play in distance education,* is universally correct. The rest of his statement is particularly appropriate and applicable to the Third World as indeed *there is a need for some substantial research to help distance educators and librarians understand the precise nature and extent of this role.* Difficulties and deficiencies notwithstanding, professionals in the Third World are charged with the responsibility of providing library and information services to their distance learners. The development of solutions and responses that meet the unique needs of the Third World is their responsibility.

TECHNOLOGY IN DISTANCE LIBRARIANSHIP

The application of technology to support the delivery of modern distance education programmes is widely used in developed countries. There is a widespread assumption on the part of many distance educators and administrators that technology is accessible to all distance learners. This assumption is not always correct in developed countries and certainly cannot be assumed to be the norm for distance learners in Third World countries. Many distance learners are located in countries that are not technologically sophisticated. The only medium that is widespread in the Third World is radio. It can be contended that the use of radio as a medium to support distance education, particularly in the Third World has been underdeveloped, underused and underestimated. Using radio also has another advantage. Anyone listening to a broadcast is able to absorb at least some of the information being transmitted. Therefore, distance teaching by radio provides an element of continuing education for those who listen to such programmes out of general interest in addition to supporting a prescribed course of studies.

The use of toll-free telephones services, E-mail, the Internet, faxes, Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs) with dial-up connections, fast mail, home videos, home-based computers with a variety of peripherals and a cornucopia of other technology-dependent services and devices have all been fashioned to provide support to distance learners with regard to their library and information services in developed countries.

A similar level of services is not mirrored throughout the Third World. In some countries, particularly in large cities, the existence of technology-based services is evident. However, in rural areas or even localities just outside the main cities or towns, access to technology often drops rapidly. Therefore the application and integration of technology into the delivery of library and information services to distance learners in the Third World cannot be taken for granted. The use of technology-driven services has to be based on existing services. The development of contingency plans in case the technological services are inoperable, for whatever reason, is an imperative. Reliable technology-based services are affected by such factors as power surges which can damage equipment, static or broken connections due to weather, internal and cross-border strife and a high level of malfunctioning which often occurs in the developing world. The inability to secure replacement parts and, frequently, the lack of local expertise to repair malfunctioning equipment are also problems.

Consequently, while the use of technology to provide library and information services to distance learners in the Third World is possible and the ultimate goal of many information providers, local realities and existing barriers affect its integration.

The factor of cost is also a critical variable in the use of technology in distance librarianship. The cost of computers, video and television hardware and other equipment is often outside the purchasing power of many individuals in the Third World. Many homes do not have electricity, either because the service is not available or the family cannot afford it. Telephones which are often the connecting communication devices are either non-existent or too expensive for individuals. A good example of the cost involved is the cost of a telephone call between Barbados and New York. A call between the two countries costs the user in Barbados more than twice as much (in US dollars) as it would if the same call is generated from New York. Toll-free numbers used frequently within the continental United States and its offshore states are not readily available to persons outside of the United States even if their needs are legitimate. Communications carriers must become more sensitive to the need for and use of their services for educational purposes. Rates must be charged at levels that are affordable by all so that there is no disparity of access based on telecommunication charges.

THE LITERATURE OF DISTANCE LIBRARIANSHIP

One of the difficulties that a new field or discipline encounters is the scarcity of documentation. Information on distance librarianship has only recently begun to be reported in the literature. In a random survey of 13 publications on distance education, including conference proceedings, Cavanagh (1994) reported that no mention appeared about the library in the majority of items scanned. This is in keeping with the findings of other writers (Appavoo, 1985; Carty, 1991; Watson, 1992 *et al.*).

The existence of bibliographic sources is a major indicator of the maturity of a discipline. Several short bibliographies have been produced. These include the work of Hayworth (1982), Snow (1987) and Shklanka (1990). *Library services for off-campus and distance education: an annotated bibliography* (Latham, Slade and Budnick, 1991) is the first major publication of this genre in the field. That a new edition is currently in production indicates the importance of this work to the field, as well as an indication of the accelerated growth rate of information in and of the field. This work will provide researchers with many sources that hitherto were either unknown or unpublished.

In 1991, another important contribution to the literature appeared. In a special edition of*Library Trends*, off-campus library programmes in higher education are examined. The scope of this publication is world-wide. It provides significant information of the practice of distance librarianship at the tertiary level.

Kascus and Aguilar's (1988) paper on *Providing library support to off-campus programs* is an important benchmark in distance librarianship within the United States. While the focus of the paper is American, the information it provides is of utility to the practice of distance librarianship wherever it occurs.

The professional literature of Australia and New Zealand is replete with a number of articles on distance librarianship in both of these countries. Much of this material reports on specific libraries, systems and experiences, all of which are important in the development of a theory of distance librarianship.

The writings on distance librarianship in the Third World sector of the Commonwealth is particularly sparse. Two reasons may account for this. Publications on and from the Third World generally do not match the levels of publication in developed countries. Secondly, given the recent emergence of distance librarianship, published material on any aspect of distance librarianship in the Third World is understandably small (Watson, in press, 1995, 1994, 1993, 1992; Williams, 1986; Jackson, 1983). Latham, Slade and Budnick state that less than 10% of the citations in their bibliography is attributable to the Third World.

The development of distance education systems in the Indian sub-continent as well as the large publishing industry in that country are conducive to the wealth of published material on distance librarianship in the country. These range from journal articles to books and other materials (Jagannathan, 1988; *et al.*).

While the preceding examples may appear plentiful, when one examines the literature it will be recognised that, in the main, these publications are descriptive in scope. Literature that is descriptive must, of necessity, precede research and the development of a theory of a discipline. A descriptive exploration of distance librarianship is therefore a necessary first step in the development of a theory of distance librarianship. Cavanagh's observation that distance library services need to benefit from the efforts of research into all aspects of the topic is a challenge that must be taken up.

While not geared specifically to the Commonwealth, mention must be made of the biennial Off-Campus Library Services Conference sponsored by the Central Michigan University in the United States of America. The proceedings of these meetings include all the papers presented. The principal focus is on the United States experience. However, there are some presentations from the Commonwealth and the other contributions provide useful information for distance librarians in the Commonwealth.

DISTANCE LIBRARIANSHIP

It is important to note the pertinent remarks on the role of libraries in distance education which were made in 1986 by Richard Johnson, Special Commissioner to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission in Australia. He states that *...in the development of distance education libraries have a central place. They supply crucial learning resources.* Continuing he observed that those providing distance services *have particular problems beyond those of libraries in conventional institutions: special problems of costs in book purchase, in postage, in administration: special problems of administration involved in the whole business of despatch and retrieval; special problems of counselling bemused students who are not simply on the other side of a desk but may be hundreds of kilometres away.* Johnson's comments affirm that the role of the librarian, libraries and information are central to the success of distance education. Johnson also unequivocally states that *without* [quality] *library services the success of distance education* [in Australia] *will not continue.* Johnson further asserts that traditional skills need the support of additional skills and that new emphases are needed. Included among these would be an understanding of the principles of distance education, the development of communication skills with tutors and students, the development of a quick understanding of the problems and needs associated with distance learning and teaching as well as the development of strong interpersonal skills. These statements are powerful indicators of the dimensions of distance librarianship.

The development of models, proposals and theories contributes to the maturation of a discipline. Meacham and Zubir's (1992) model of distance education for developing countries does not include any specific reference to library services. However, the need for library and information services in distance education is implicit. Affleck's (1987) *Proposed model for the provision of library services to academic distance and other off-campus educational programmes in Saskatchewan* is comprehensive in its coverage. He states that *the proposed model will provide the necessary library services without requiring separate buildings, extensive collections and staffing and library management systems at a number of local sites in the province* [of Saskatchewan]. He proposes that his model is cost-effective, providing the user with access to collections that have greater depth and diversity and a greater degree of subject expertise than would be available if the model is not implemented. Affleck's model, with modifications, can provide a good guide for any distance teaching institution attempting to develop quality library services for its students. In addition to models such as Affleck's, the management of distance library services can benefit from the application of standards and guidelines that exist for regular services.

Standards and guidelines

One of the factors which contributes to the legitimisation of a library and information service is the existence of guidelines and standards. The recentness of the imprint dates of such publications internationally indicates the relative youth of the discipline. The 1992 *Canadian guidelines for library services to distance learners* is the most recent attempt to standardise, at a national level, the delivery of library services to distance learners. The Australian *Guidelines for library services to external students* appeared in 1982.

The 1981 guidelines which were produced by the Association of College and Research Libraries in the United States were reviewed by LaBrake-Harrison in 1992 and were deemed to be suitable for the practice of distance librarianship in that country. LaBrake-Harrison was of the view that until the field (in the U.S.A.) became more mature, it was unnecessary to replace the existing guidelines with standards.

Many countries which have a long tradition of distance learning and well established distance institutions do not have regulatory measures. New Zealand and South Africa are examples. Great Britain does not have published standards or guidelines. While Fischer's (1988) *Library services for adult and continuing education and independent learning: a guide* does not fall into either category, this publication is a comparable document for that nation.

Libraries in Third World countries are generally underdeveloped and lack the sophisticated approach that is found in many developed countries. Distance librarianship is no exception. Therefore the general absence of library regulations for distance services is not surprising. Where guidelines or standards are needed in Third World societies those developed for other countries are used or adapted as appropriate. The absence of such management tools is a contributing factor to a low standard of information service to distance learners. To determine the nature of library services that distance learners need, it is necessary to divide the market into sectors and identify the unique characteristics of each.

The interactors

Distance librarianship has four distinct sectors or groups. How these four groups act, interact, relate and connect with each other are some of the determining factors that will lead to a theory of the discipline. The groups and their characteristics are that:

- distance educators and tutors, and others associated with the design and delivery of the academic programme;
- distance education administrators and those who are responsible for the mechanics and delivery of distance programmes;
- distance learners who use such systems to achieve their educational goals; and
- distance librarians who provide critical support services.

Distance educators

Distance educators and tutors need library services to support their development of teaching materials. Access to up-to-date materials that represent cross-cultural and multinational thinking and positions on a given topic is important if the learning materials are to be comprehensive. Additionally, distance educators and tutors need to keep abreast of developments in distance education and teaching in their subject area. Therefore, they need access to collections of distance teaching course materials from other institutions for research and comparative purposes.

Distance education administrators

Distance education administrators require a range of distance education publications. Research findings on various aspects of distance teaching and education are important. Information on student surveys, administrative structures, costing exercises and other administrative functions and activities need to be available. A professional collection on distance education is vital. This collection should include works on distance librarianship which would place the role of the library and its services within a contextual framework.

Distance learners

Distance students provide the largest user group served by distance librarianship. The courses pursued by distance learners cover the entire educational spectrum – primary to post-doctoral, nonformal and formal. The age profiles range from the very young to post retirees. Whatever the course, the level of the programme studied or the age of the student, the library and information needs of distance learners do not differ from those of their colleagues who follow the same programme through an intramural system.

The provision of library services to students registered in traditional programmes assumes that students will always be able to go to the library. The reality of distance learners vis-à-vis accessing library services is very different. The distance between them and those who could satisfy their library and information requirements makes it easy for their requisites to be marginalised. The adage "out of sight, out of mind" succinctly describes the plight of distance learners with respect to their library and information needs.

Another factor which contributes to the absence of creditable library services to distance learners is the fact that, to a large extent, they are "invisible" clients. Howard (1985) approaches the issue differently when she states that *learners may be free from time, place and pace restriction but may also be free from the necessity or luxury of adequate library resources and services to support the learning process.* Muldins' (1986) perception of the issue is that *in theory, the library has always been aware that it must provide for the information needs of all students, regardless of the mode of study they have chosen. Unfortunately, external students are less visible than internal students and usually less vocal.* As a result, Muldins anticipates that any improvements in the quality of library service for distance learners are likely to occur at a slower rate. A long-term goal is that, in time, these services should not be seen to be merely an addendum in the service chain, but an established sector in the library and information service.

The fact that distance learners are disparate also poses a number of concerns for librarians. These include the students' level of competence in using libraries and information services. Another issue is timeliness in acquiring information. In conventional systems such issues either do not exist or they are corrected early in the learning experience. In traditional institutions any deficiency at this level is addressed through bibliographic instruction sessions in either a group or one-on-one situation. The use and importance of informal channels that are employed to great effect by intramural students in letting each other know about the library and its services cannot be underestimated.

Distance librarians

Libraries and librarians have a critical role to play in closing the distance learning circle thus becoming a connecting, communicating and interlinking educational force through their provision of information to learners. One of the most important challenges that librarians and other information providers face is the need to educate distance educators and administrators about the place and importance of libraries in distance education. Also needed is an appreciation of how important the development of information-gathering skills is for students. The prepackaging of learning materials leads to the mistaken belief that distance educators can and will provide all the information that a distance student needs to have. Store (1980) and other writers take issue with this position. This belief is fallible in that distance materials cannot present all the information that students need; distance materials cannot cater to individual needs and learning differences, and a total reliance on prepackaged materials hinders the acquisition of life-serving information-gathering skills.

The need to develop a professional collection on all aspects of distance education is paramount. The professional collection must cover all aspects of distance librarianship as well as all of the other disciplines that are required to provide quality library services to distance learners. The importance of having immediate access to information of this type cannot be overstated.

Philosophical issues

Underpinning the development of any library service are the philosophical and mission statements that give the service its *raison d'être*. The existence of such pronouncements is particularly necessary given the amorphous nature of the principal clientele of distance librarianship – the distance learner. Indeed a statement detailing the role, scope and contribution of the library to the distance education programme should be a part of the planning process from its inception as proposed by York (1994).

Dual-mode and single-mode institutions encounter different issues with the formulation of philosophical and mission statements. Dual-mode institution administrators blithely assume that the arrangements for intramural students will somehow be sufficient for, and extended to include, their distance students. This assumption has several flaws. Distance services are not necessarily taken up by the library as a matter of course. The library may not be aware of the diversification in educational delivery strategies of the institution. Distance librarianship has an element of time-sensitivity that conventional services do not have. Time to formulate information needs, time to collect and collate the appropriate information, time to send the information gathered to the student and time for the student to make effective use of the information received requires a time-frame that is several times longer than that required by students enrolled in conventional programmes.

In single-mode institutions, there is often a statement that is germane to the availability of library services for distance learners. However, an examination of such statements will indicate that they are generally vague and are seldom supported infrastructurally to ensure a vibrant service. Without doubt the vaguer the statement, the lower the commitment to provide a quality service. Thus, even in single-mode institutions, a strong philosophical and mission statement needs to be evident.

The trans-border effect of distance education systems and procedures has already been alluded to. The influence of the OU on other distance education institutions cannot be minimised. One of the negative influences of the OU is its approach to library services for its students. When the OU was established library services to its students were not a part of its student support system. This decision was taken against the background of a very well developed, organised, resourced and structured system of library services in Great Britain. It was felt therefore that OU students had access to a public library service that could and would support their needs and that many of the students would also have access, if so allowed, to other collections (Carty, 1992; Crocker, 1986; Harry, 1986). As a result, the OU did not provide library services to its students. Regrettably, this approach has been adopted by many other distance teaching institutions around the world. This decision is unfortunate because the local factors which influenced the OU's decision do not exist in all other cases.

New Zealand is perhaps the only other Commonwealth country that might have been able to assume that its public library systems would and could support the library and information needs of its distance learners. However, some public libraries were and are very sensitive about being expected to provide adequately for students of tertiary institutions. Even for primary and secondary schools, public libraries do not expect to be used as libraries of first resort. When The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (OPNZ) was established, it tried to enter into contractual relationships with public and other tertiary level institutions but this was not readily accepted. Many of the tertiary institutions saw the OPNZ as a competitor and thought that a contractual relationship would be inappropriate. The OPNZ has been building a collection of its own (Wooliscroft, 1995).

Additionally, the period between the end of World War II and the commencement of the oil crisis in the late 1970s was one of rapid expansion of many libraries. The affluence that existed in the library world at that time has been followed by a period of shrinkage, recession, reconfiguration and retrenchment in all aspects of library services. As a result the promulgation of a philosophical statement on library services to distance learners becomes even more important and necessary.

Management

A well organised library service depends on the existence of a supportive and flexible management structure. The management of distance services requires a hierarchy which bears considerable resemblance to the structure needed by traditional library services.

Three major differences are noted. The professional/non-professional staff:student ratio is likely to be different – especially where user services are concerned. Secondly, distance library services need additional categories of staff for the distribution, collection, return and reshelving of library stock. And thirdly, there is the need for facilitators who will act as intermediaries between the user and the materials they need.

Many distance services are an integral part of an established library. When this type of management arrangement occurs, it is absolutely vital that distance services are supported in all respects and at levels that are equivalent to face-to-face services. Permeating the management structure must be an understanding of and a positive approach to distance students and their needs. This is a fundamental component of a vibrant distance service.

In some distance institutions the library service is a part of the distance education administrative structure or operates as an adjunct to the traditional operation and service. While this arrangement works, it is not ideal, for three reasons. Firstly, the facilities, including the book stock, are likely to be less than satisfactory for the service is not under the administration and directorship of a professional librarian. Secondly, distance educators and administrators are not generally persuaded that a quality library service is a necessary ingredient of a good distance programme. Consequently, a service that is separate from an established library system is likely to have underdeveloped stock levels, staff quotas and service activities. Thirdly, experience has shown that when library services are managed by non-librarians the quality and vision of the service is adversely affected. (The merging of libraries with leisure services in the United Kingdom had disastrous effects on the quality and level of library services).

In many dual-mode institutions, the practice is that a professional librarian is charged with the responsibility of the distance service. Support (as available) is given by colleagues, who are often mainly engaged with providing user services. Technical and other services are provided by the staff of the parent unit. Policy formulation often occurs at this level, in response to needs, rather than at the macro management level.

One of the major difficulties in arriving at a management structure with appropriate staffing levels is the absence of guidelines which would assist in determining this issue. Secondly, faculty members are themselves not able to give guidance on this issue, as often their experience in distance education is limited. Finally, the rapidly evolving nature of distance education as well as the changing demands for library services do not allow a clarity of vision that a long established discipline would provide.

Funding

The funding of distance services is guided by a number of considerations. These include institutional norms, professional guidelines, local practices, international trends and developments and user pressure on the system. Ultimately the decision is based on what the institution can bear given the circumstances cited above.

Financing buildings and equipment is directly related to the type of service the institution has to or can support for its distance learners. Emoluments, at all levels, are guided by institutional agreements and local practice.

The area that provides the greatest financial challenge is that of stock development and maintenance. Issues such as multiple copy holdings, the loan period, the size of classes, transportation facilities, collection depth and levels all are affected by the financial allocation available for distance library services.

Some other areas that need to be considered when the level of funding is being determined is the policy on photocopying charges, the responsibility for costs incurred in the despatch and return of materials, the meeting of charges for fax and telephone services and costs associated with database searches. Service establishment costs is one aspect, but who will bear user costs is the other aspect of the issue.

The size of the student body, level of service offered and demanded, who accepts charges and the level of the intermediary role that the information professional assumes between the student and the information sources, all have cost implications. Some institutions use their face-to-face financial norms adding or subtracting as necessary. Others use a system of trial-and-error beginning with a fixed sum and making adjustments as needs and services require. The existence of documented evidence on the services provided also help to shape the financial allocation granted.

In single-mode institutions determinations on the funding arrangements are usually straightforward as there is no conflict between the types of student registration for funds to support their library and information services. The budget for materials and services may at first be minimal but evidence suggests that these figures are constantly reviewed in order to develop and sustain a quality service (Unisa, IGNOU *et al.*).

The responsibility for gaining copyright clearance for text being reproduced in distance teaching materials and the attendant costs are often undertaken by the library. Consequently, the budget provided must enable the institution – through its library – to gain the relevant clearances and pay the appropriate fees. Library skills and a detailed understanding of copyright laws nationally and internationally are necessary and make this a very challenging position.

In dual-mode institutions if the funds to support face-to-face and distance teaching are not separated, competition between the two modes of teaching for library and information support is likely to occur. The principle of making, within the library budget, separate provision for distance services and face-to-face services in dual-mode institutions is cardinal. Getting distance library service on the books is vital.

Facilities

The initiation of a new service requires consideration of the facilities that will be provided to house all the activities that emanate from or are required by or of the new service. This includes an examination of the literature and existing services in the particular field. Even if the services are not exactly alike, past experiences can inform decisions about a new service. One of the most perplexing and complicated matters that faces distance librarianship is the amount of space that a distance service will require. Unique distance library services such as dispatching and receiving docks, packaging and unpacking and the storage of literature other than books for distribution to students need to be facilitated. How to make a reasonable allocation for such services is a perplexing issue as each system has a number of variables that are situation-specific. The receipt and dispatch of materials at distance teaching institutions is so significant, that a number of these institutions have post offices on their campuses to handle the volume of mail handled, for example, IGNOU and Unisa. Other universities have special arrangements with the post office and have negotiated special rates for library purposes as is done at the University of Victoria in Canada.

Space needs for planning, administrative and technical aspects of distance services do not differ considerably from traditional libraries.

Materials storage for distance services bear no resemblance to traditional services, particularly where large numbers of a single title are purchased to serve classes which have enrollments that are in the thousands. For example, it is not unusual at Unisa to have an undergraduate course with 5,000 students. The storage of large multiple copy runs is space, labour and capital intensive. The application of a 1:10 book/student ratio may be unrealistic and therefore local exigencies such as budget, storage, shelf-life of a book and access to other collections are usually considered in the determination process of such matters. Other storage issues include the needs of non-print and other materials. For example, at the University of Victoria (Canada) copies of short items – articles or extracts from books – are kept in lateral filing cabinets according to course and are sent out to students on request. The development of this collection is a collaborative effort between the library and academic staff.

The belief that distance learners will seldom, if ever, come to the library leads to the mistaken assumption that space in the library for reference and study purposes is not a need. This situation is repeated in many Third World countries, both large and small. In developing countries in particular, the library or study centre is often the only place where a student can work in relative peace and quiet. As many homes lack even the most basic amenities – including light and water – the study centre or library is the only place where serious work can be pursued. Unisa, for example, has a very large study centre in Johannesburg which, in addition to having a collection of books and other materials, seats several hundred students. Steele's (1994) research in the Caribbean indicated that access to a place to study was an important need for distance students in the Eastern Caribbean. One of the needs that students frequently articulate is that these centres should be open in the evenings, on weekends and on holidays, these being the times that distance students have at their disposal for studying.

Longitudinal studies and other research activities on student use patterns are needed to provide information on which creditable recommendations and decisions can be made. Cross-cultural comparisons while useful cannot replace the need for local, national and regional work in this area.

Collection development

Acquisition policies are determined by the range of courses being offered, the level of courses being delivered, financial allocation for stock acquisition, enrollment numbers, the loan periods being offered, the time needed to transport materials between the library and the user and the quality of the collection if one is already in existence. New single-mode institutions will often have to build up their collection from the ground, whereas dual-mode institutions have a pre-existing collection which can be built upon or expanded as needed.

Dual-mode institutions have three options at their disposal. The use of an existing collection to serve all of their students; the expansion and augmentation of an existing collection to provide greater access for all students; or, the development of a separate collection for distance students. The one requiring the greatest capital allocation is the last option cited. Rationalisation of collections and collection building have been important features of the library world in recent times and distance services are not immune from this development. Therefore the decision to develop an entirely separate stock is seldom taken, particularly for expensive and less frequently used titles.

The establishment of a collection in single-mode institutions usually occurs from the inception of the institution. The size and scope of the collection is determined partly by standards or guidelines for face-to-face institutions, partly by records of usage patterns (where applicable and in existence), partly by advice gleaned from published literature on the topic and partly by suggestions from tutors and professionals. The decision to develop satellite collections will depend on the existence and accessibility of local collections of relevant materials for the students.

Particularly affecting this decision is what resources the students have access to in their localities. Are distance students given access and under what conditions are the main considerations? One practice in the United States that is gaining ground is payment on a per capita basis to another educational concern by the distance institution for the provision of library services to its students. Within the Commonwealth such an arrangement occurs in British Columbia, Canada between Simon Fraser University (SFU) and the Open Learning Agency (OLA). Through a contractual arrangement SFU provides library services for OLA students. OLA employs a librarian to work at SFU; this person sends books and other materials from the SFU library to OLA distance students. OLA's contribution also covers other support services such as reference queries and a toll-free line.

The University of Northern British Columbia in Canada also adopted a novel approach to its collection building activities. The establishment of this institution was community driven. Therefore, one of the earliest appointments was that of a University Archivist, whose responsibility was the collection and organisation of all the materials that related to the development of the institution. Additionally, the collection-building process was community supported by the donation of materials from personal collections. Thus the community became informal members of the acquisition team.

Close collaboration with subject tutors is necessary to ensure that students are not referred to materials to which they are unlikely to have access. Indeed, no reading lists should be distributed before the library has had a chance to vet them. This would ensure that students are not referred to out-of-print and unobtainable materials. Collaboration at this level would also allow the library to prepare for anticipated requests in a timely manner. Inadequate notice places the library under unnecessary strain, causes increased student frustration and leads to underpreparation with regard to their academic programme and student activity.

Postgraduate studies via distance are likely to place increased demands on inter-library lending and database searching services. Such students also need a higher level of bibliographic instruction to support the information-gathering skills that advanced programmes require. The provision of such services requires innovative and creative approaches by the library and its staff. As each postgraduate programme – particularly those that are research-based – has it own specific demands and needs, each situation requires its own approaches and solutions. One very good practice however, is the documentation of all steps pursued in searching for information and materials as such documentation will be very useful reference and resource guides for future work in related areas.

The development of strong, supportive and current collections depends on a close collaboration between library and teaching departments. Collection-building is particularly sensitive to good relations between faculty and library staff. The library is an academic support unit, thus in order to perform its mandate creditably it must be given the appropriate status and recognition within the academic hierarchy. Consequently, it is imperative for librarians to have an intimate understanding of distance education, the development of teaching materials and the administrative aspects thatimpinge on the existence of a quality distance library service.

In addition to developing resources to support learning, the library in a distance teaching institution has a responsibility to develop a professional collection covering all aspects of distance education. The unavailability of professional literature handicaps the development of programmes in many ways. The existence of such collections is also another way for the library to be seen as being relevant to distance education and learning.

Satellite collections

Some distance teaching institutions have an arrangement with public libraries for the establishment of "distance teaching corners" in their libraries. These collections are based on the needs of distance students who can go to these public libraries and use their collections. Such agreements are made in Thailand (Appavoo, 1992). The existence of such arrangements may possibly allow the opportunity for a student to access some level of library assistance from the host institution.

In Canada, satellite collections are frequently located at cooperating institutions such as public libraries and other suitable sites. These collections are placed in central sites and are "overseen" by a responsible person at the remote site. Institutions which make use of such arrangements include the University of Regina, the University of Manitoba and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

In Tanzania, in order to encourage librarians in other institutions to serve distance learners, librarians are given a small stipend in recognition that this service would incur additional work and responsibility (Mmari, 1996). Another African example occurs at Technikon S.A. which is located in Johannesburg. Map 1 illustrates the distribution of the over 200 satellite collections of this institution in South Africa. Many of them are in public libraries and other educational institutions. Strong working relationships between the library staff at the college and their adjunct staff are enjoyed. Additionally, these collections are client-driven. Initially, the stock was determined by the Technikon's library staff. Under this system some books were heavily used while others were not. Now, client needs and requests are the principal driving forces in the development of such collections. This approach is based on a need to access information that is not otherwise available, rather than principally providing what the users ought to have available.

User services

Distance learners' requirements for user services are no different from those of students pursuing courses or programmes at traditional, conventional or residential institutions. It is the methodologies used to deliver information that differ. Access to information in a timely fashion assumes a different level of importance in distance librarianship.

Librarianship has been traditionally based and operated on the premise that the information seeker will go to the library or will initiate the steps to seek out the sources of the information. Distance contributes a new dimension that has to be considered. Distance students may not know of a library or even what services it can or does provide, or where they can access the service even if they are library-literate. The delivery

Photo 1. Unisa material on automated conveyor belt being prepared for packaging
Courtesy: Unisa

Photo 2. Unisa study materials being weighed for postage
Courtesy: Unisa

of any user service must take into account the implications that distance causes as well as the need to be time-sensitive, client-friendly, aware of user needs and empathize with the difficulties that distance learners face.

In developed countries where the use of technology is relatively widespread, economical and well developed, the delivery of user services is considerably easier. Fax, toll-free lines, E-mail, and other telecommunications methodologies are all used effectively for the benefit of the student. This experience is not as widespread or accessible in developing countries owing to the high costs, inaccessibility of hardware and complementary software packages, the incompatibility of communicating channels and the unreliability of communicating channels.

Bibliographic instruction

Student exposure to the facilitation of, and confidence in the use of the resources of a library is accommodated by bibliographic instruction. The development of life-serving information-gathering skills is one of the most important user services that are provided in face-to-face services. Bibliographic instruction occurs at two levels. How to use the library, its catalogues, bibliographical guides, exploiting the materials used to store information, and conducting a search – going from a large topic to a narrow area of interest or the reverse process – are important life-serving skills. The second level is bibliographic instruction that is subject or topic specific. For example what does the library have on reggae? This could and would include the music, the society, cultural and historical forces and influences that lead to its creation. Also relevant would be information on the artistes and all the various facets of the production of that particular sound. While reggae grew out of a specific cultural experience, why is it found in every part of the globe and translated into many languages?

How to deliver this type of training to remote learners provides a challenge for distance librarians. Using old strategies in new ways and identifying new strategies to deliver old and proven skills is a task. The facility to provide important explanations and examples in a face-to-face bibliographic instruction session is totally absent from the distance librarianship experience. While librarians have a critical role in providing this experience Cleyle (1992) reports that *distance education students are truly imaginative in their methods for obtaining information: talking to local specialists, visiting nearby museums or local social service agencies, or writing to authors*. She exhorts distance librarians to focus on the *tools and techniques of the process*. Combining the professional skills of the librarians with the ingenuity of distance students will produce well-educated students.

In traditional services bibliographic instruction is done at a personal level with print as the principal support mechanism. Appavoo (1985) contends that while print is useful in a distance scenario this medium is static and presents the information in a vacuum. Technology enhances the information provided and enriches the student's learning opportunity.

The use of technology-driven sources overcomes a number of barriers. One is that students are able to access the data from their homes or a local site. OPACs, the Internet, CD-ROM databases with dial-up facilities are but some of the modalities that are technology-dependent. Students with ready access to the appropriate technology are able to connect with the existing systems and services. However, knowledge of the attendant protocols and search strategies is a prerequisite to the use of these storage and access devices. How can that be delivered? Will printed guides be sent? Will face-to-face instruction be provided? Would a video be useful and if so, where would it be developed? If a video is used how will students be able to view these tapes and apply the knowledge that they will have acquired?

Some institutions have used a mixture of approaches to provide bibliographic and other user instructional activities. The University of Regina has developed a bibliographic instruction package called U.READ. This package has three components: a video, printed materials and citation lists. Contact with the librarian located on the main campus is also possible. Increasingly, in North America interactive video is being used to provide bibliographic instruction. With the liberalisation of access to the Internet and other cyberspace facilitators, using these connecting and communicating devices for bibliographic instruction is likely to become more frequent.

A high degree of technological integration in the delivery of services assumes that a student has access to the necessary hardware, is competent to use it, feels comfortable with using the range of protocols necessary and can afford any associated costs for technology-driven services. This assumption cannot be made with any certainty in the Third World. In the absence of technology, what solutions are there to this dilemma? One is the development of quality printed guides which teach the basics of bibliographic instruction and other user services. Comprehensive student guides to the library as well as subject specific documents and guides can overcome the tyranny of technology. In addition, radio is an underused medium for this purpose. A number of Third World distance teaching institutions have interactive audio systems as a part of their distance teaching operations. The use of interactive audio to provide a comprehensive range of library services is another possibility.

Visits to remote sites by professional librarians are sometimes used to provide bibliographic instruction. The value of this approach is the personal contact that it affords. Students benefit from face-to-face interaction and the librarians welcome the opportunity to ascertain the scope of materials to which students have immediate access. Such visits also enable librarians from the distance teaching institution to have contact with personnel who provide library service to the students. Personal visits however do not increase the immediate contact that distance students have with the units of information storage.

A tension that was explored by Cameron (1988) in *A full long spoon* was the thin divide between "spoonfeeding" and the right to have easy/reasonable access to materials that students should have and/or use. Spoonfeeding assumes that all of a student's library and information needs are either prepackaged or supplied on an "on demand" basis. On the other hand, to compensate for the physical divide that does exist many libraries will conduct extensive literature searches on behalf of students. This occurs particularly where the distance teaching institution does not provide library and information services or where the student has to depend on limited local resources or the use of their own initiative, both of which operate outside of a planned library and information support service. Cameron found as "unacceptable" the assumption that public libraries would act as the source of first resort for an academic programme. Neither of these solutions attended to the development of the student's information literacy skills. Information abandonment*in lieu* of spoonfeeding is not an option. Spoonfeeding as an alternative to the development of information skills competence is not acceptable. Ultimately, the goal of distance librarianship must be the acquisition by students of competence in the accessing, using, assimilating and synthesizing information at levels that is in balance with the needs of their programme of study and life style.

Whatever the system used to provide the distance learner with bibliographic instruction information literacy is a requirement, information confidence is demanded and information empowerment is crucial.

Reference services

Time and a mutual understanding of the reference need are critical. Students have to allocate enough time for the initiation of the reference query and the response. Thus, a distance student cannot wait until a week before an assignment is due to pose a reference enquiry. Additionally, the real information need and not the perceived need has to be understood by both the student and the librarian. This is particularly important if the topic is difficult or esoteric. Depth of information required is also very important. One of the very valuable activities at the University of Manitoba is that whenever a reference search is conducted for an undergraduate distance student the results are filed, so that future queries on the same or related topics can be researched in less time.

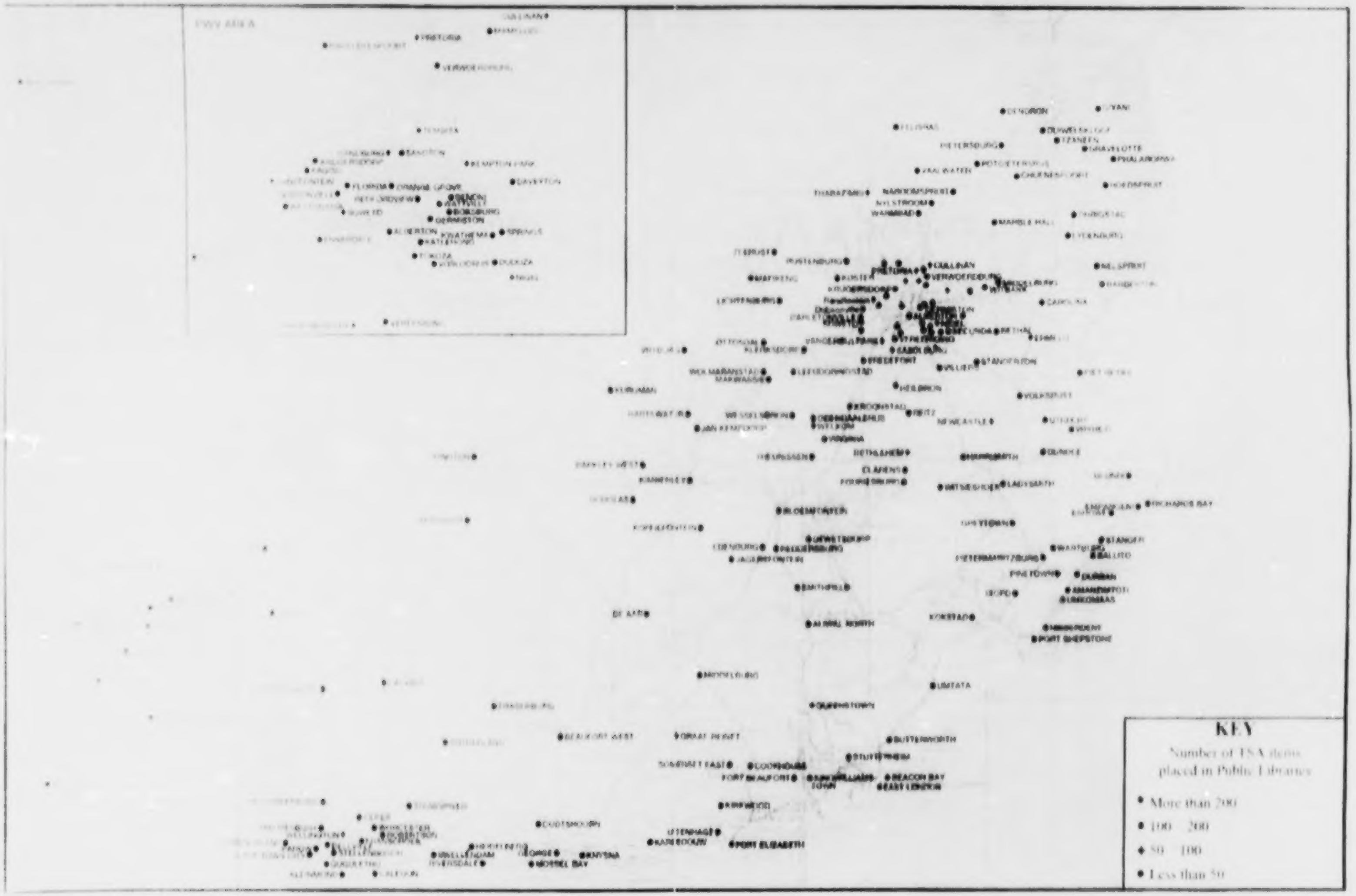
An understanding of the need for specific information is illustrated by the following West Indian example. In Jamaica, if one asks for information on ackees, you will get information on a fruit product that grows on a tree but which is prepared as a vegetable for eating. It has a red pod which encases yellow segments with black seeds. The black seeds, red pod and red velvety lining within the yellow segments are discarded. The yellow segment, which is savory, is boiled or steamed and served in a variety of ways. It forms part of the national dish – saltfish and ackee. In Barbados, ackee is a fruit that grows on a large tree. The fruit has a green skin, which covers a seed that is covered by a velvety light peach-coloured pulp. The skin is broken, discarded and the pulp is eaten. The same fruit is called guinep in Jamaica. Those who are aware of the variant use of the name use Jamaica ackee for the fruit that is cooked and ackee for the fruit which is known as guinep in Jamaica.

A major difference in reference services between distance and traditional librarianship is that the librarian generally acts as intermediary between the information-seeker and the information itself. Directing someone to the catalogue, printed bibliographies and shelves is not the norm for reference services in distance librarianship. Conducting the search and advising the user of what was done on their behalf is likely to be the norm. Thus reference services are time intensive. The need to use library staff to conduct reference searches on behalf of students is an important operational factor of distance librarianship. This is a fundamental difference between traditional services and distance services.

Materials delivery

Consequent upon the identification of appropriate materials is the operation of an effective and efficient delivery system that is not too expensive. Delivery options range from country-to-country and can vary even within the same country. The regular post, fast mail, courier service, faxes and even on-line transmission

TECHNIKON SA'S DECENTRALISED STUDENT COLLECTION



Map 1: Technikon SA's Decentralised Student Collection
Courtesy Technikon SA (with adaptions)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

are some of the possibilities. In some institutions, the volume of posted materials is such that a post office is located on the campus to expedite the dispatch of mail. In addition, the use of personal contacts to hand deliver materials, inter-island schooners or any other form of transport that links the location of the student with the information source can and must be deployed to ensure a timely delivery to the user and a reliable and timely return of the material to the supplier. The delivery of materials is a major sphere of activity over which the distance teaching institution has little control. Its effect however, is one of the major attributes by which a distance service is likely to be judged.

Affleck (1987) recommended that Saskatchewan and Alberta could use the mail, inter-government department delivery services and other courier services to support the delivery of distance teaching materials within each of these two Canadian provinces. Not covered in this model are the bi-coastal operations of many North American distance teaching institutions as well as the international aspect of many distance teaching institutions. Despite these limitations, it does provide considerable direction on the cooperative aspect of materials delivery that distance teaching institutions have to contemplate.

Inter-library cooperation

The use of the resources of one institution to satisfy the information needs of another is the fundamental principle of inter-library lending. Distance education forces institutions to examine other aspects of inter-institutional cooperation with a view to satisfying student's information needs. Examples of inter-library cooperation have already been given under collection development, user services and satellite collections.

A future development in inter-institutional cooperation could be the collaboration of several distance teaching institutions combining to support one study centre at a location to serve all the distance learners in that area irrespective of their institution of instruction. This would result in economies in collection development, personnel and facilities, with a qualitative improvement in the level of services. Several institutions pooling their resources would be able to provide more books, better staffing and a higher level of user services rather than each institution struggling to provide an inadequate service. Distance education may well foster an even higher level of inter-library cooperation than currently exists.

FEE OR FREE?

A unique debate concerning distance library services is whether this service should be provided with or without a charge to the client. One school of belief is that as distance students are often employed and therefore do not face the same financial hardships that residential students face they should be charged for their library services. This argument is only valid for distance students who are employed. For those who are unemployed distance education is a means to avoid increasing the financial burden on their families that living at another location or providing transportation to an institution some distance away would incur. Therefore a demand to pay for library services would be viewed as an additional financial burden.

The notion that information should be free should not be discounted lightly. Charging for information services could mean that those who need the service most are less likely to use it as they cannot afford its cost. The inability to access information would also contribute to the misperception that distance education is a second class system of education.

The widespread use of technology places another burden on the students in terms of accessing information. Students are required to purchase their own computing hardware to enable them to link into technology-driven information services. For many students the cost of a computer and the connect charges are outside of their financial ability. Admittedly the cost of hardware is being reduced, nevertheless the ability of all students to make such purchases cannot be presumed. Students resident outside of developed countries – especially North America – face another disadvantage. The large rebates that are enjoyed by students in these countries are often not available globally – hence the same machine will cost a student in Illinois considerably less than it would cost a student in Rarotonga. Planned obsolescence of equipment which is the norm in developed countries is not the norm in the Third World. The working life of equipment in such areas is, perforce, extended significantly.

Another factor that needs to be included in the fee or free issue is if the instructional institution has to pay another institution to provide the services. When such costs are incurred, should they be passed on, and if so, at what level?

Distance teaching institutions funded directly by local taxes are likely to experience considerable resistance to the adding on of additional charges for services that are considered to be an integral part of the learning support system.

In a survey conducted in the Eastern Caribbean, Steele (1996) reports that students indicated that if a small fee would ensure a better library service, then despite the financial hardships and pressure that such a measure would create, they would be prepared to meet the cost. However, they wanted to be assured that this contribution would go directly to their library rather than into the central purse for subsequent disbursement for library purchases.

Charging for information also increases the divide between rich and poor countries, developed and developing nations and between the people of a single society. Persons who are well educated are able to contribute to the richness of their culture whereas those who are information-starved, underinformed and uninformed are unable to become full partners of the development process. On the other hand, others feel that as distance students already pay more money for their tuition, to make them pay for their library services is an unreasonable additional burden. Added to this is that charging for information services adds a number of new accounting procedures to the distance institution. This can mean that the amount to be collected makes the establishment of the necessary records uneconomical.

The use of technology raises a number of financial questions. Responses vary from institution to institution, but collectively they indicate that this is an issue that has to be dealt with. The issue also poses many dilemmas – social, cultural, religious, moral, political and intellectual are but some of them. These concerns must be resolved by the institution, nationally and in some instances at the international level. The needs and abilities of the majority must weigh heavily in coming to a decision on this issue.

NETWORKING

One of the most important activities that distance librarians have to pursue vigorously and rigorously is a serious and sophisticated system of networking with others involved in the delivery of distance education programmes. York's (1993) statement that *library and distance education administrators must ...seek out each other and begin to plan ...* is an imperative. An important admonition is her statement that *planning lays the foundation for quality distance education*. Librarians can no longer assume that educators understand and know what they do and how their services fit into the distance education process. In addition to speaking with professional colleagues, distance librarians also have to network with shipping and packaging departments, post offices and any other service unit that affects the delivery of library services to distance students.

Omission of the library service from the distance education system is also due to a lack of understanding on the part of librarians about the process of distance learning. Librarians are therefore charged to acquire a greater level of understanding about distance education so that they can provide a better level of service to their students. The value of networking must not be underestimated and therefore every effort must be made to develop strong and ongoing liaisons.

MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations and the marketing of library services are especially important and necessary in distance education. Reaching users who are located other than at the education institution, informing potential users and supporters about the availability, relevance or need for library services in distance education are obligatory. All previous assumptions about the role and understanding of library services in academic pursuits have to be revamped with a definitive and concerted effort made to place the library's position in the consciousness of all concerned.

The experience of Deakin University (Australia), through researched activities, is informative. It was found that the more the library and its services were advertised the more use was made of the library and its services (Cavanagh, 1994). This confirms that marketing and public relations are important activities of distance librarianship.

Interacting with colleagues at professional and at other levels is important to give the library "visibility". The library must be seen as an important part of the power structure of an institution. A position of strength in an institution is not granted, it is acquired through perseverance, dependability, making oneself and one's services indispensable, anticipating developments and changes, thus placing the library and its services in a proactive position rather than occupying a reactive and defensive position.

Public relations must be conducted at two levels, internal and external. Public relations for distance services provide an opportunity for creative, innovative and dynamic activities. Bold steps must be taken to reach students and the other publics who either use the service or who can assist in any way or who need to be better informed about the library, its services and activities. Some innovative approaches include inserting in the initial distance education registration packet welcoming letters, booklets about the library and leaflets on services specific to distance services. The inclusion of photographs of the library staff and activities, areas and service points are known to be very appealing and provide a sense of belonging. The production of a library newsletter sent to students which mentions new services, has "did you know" columns and crossword puzzles on library-related topics or the use of library skills, and reports on events in the lives of library staff are some of the features that could be included. Any measure to integrate the library into the distance programme and which makes it more client-friendly are *bona fide* public relations and marketing strategies.

The need for and the role of internal public relations are often overlooked and underestimated. Internal public relations are vital even if the organisation is only a unit within an umbrella organisation. The library must advertise its services internally as that will in turn lead staff to tell students about library services. A positive attitude towards internal public relations will also provide in-house support for the library when this is needed. In addition, internal public relations can provide feedback on services and needs that otherwise might be difficult to obtain. Any activity that provides the means of advertising, informing on and raising the general level of awareness of the contribution that libraries make must be embraced and used with alacrity.

The use of mass media to advise people about the library and its services, booklets on various library activities, a video which details the library's services to the distance learners, displays at local or regional events, especially if the display can be related to the topic of the event as well as the distance programmes would be a useful exercise. For example, at a meeting of farmers, a display on farming, covering agricultural economics, animal raising practices and techniques, genetics, feeding practices and information on new feeds and drugs on the market would be an appropriate activity for a library at a distance education institution that offers agricultural courses. The variety of approaches that can be used in marketing and public relation activities are almost limitless. Distance librarianship offers expanded horizons in this area.

Informal and social settings, with colleagues and key persons in education and other sectors that interrelate with education also provide excellent opportunities to market and engage in public relations activities to advertise a library service. Librarians must now have proactive profiles rather than an image that implies reticence and withdrawal.

Librarians traditionally have talked to each other. Distance librarianship requires that we talk with other professionals and support personnel. Distance librarianship can become a driving force to change the introspective nature and image of the profession. Distance librarians must interact with distance educators, distance education planners, course designers, course producers, nonprint materials production personnel and any other individual or group involved in the delivery of distance education programmes. Deliberate and purposeful attempts must be made to connect with the major players in distance education at the local, national and international level. Mutual professional recognition and appreciation are important and these cannot be achieved if we continue to work in isolation.

EDUCATION FOR DISTANCE LIBRARIANSHIP

Successful distance librarianship services are dependent on a cadre of staff who are able to translate needs into services and convert anticipation into demands. The development and spread of distance library services has implications for the curriculum of library schools and continuing professional education programmes. The inclusion of distance service into the curriculum of most library schools is either totally absent or minimal. Distance services are often not included as a topic for continuing education programmes. Distance education will not go away. Distance education is on a growth spiral in all countries. Therefore, the existence of a cadre of professionals who are trained in distance services and able to perform the activities associated with distance librarianship with assurance and confidence must match the growth of distance education systems.

Of importance is the exposure of librarians to the principles of distance education. Services based on a knowledge of the field and an understanding of the principles of the discipline are usually of a higher standard. Acquaintance with student needs, profiles, difficulties and expectations all contribute to the quality of service given and the esteem that is accorded to the profession.

Kascus (1993), through a survey, sought to determine the level of training in distance services in American library schools. The data collected revealed that distance services were given a low priority and that exposure to these services was given as a part of some other subject area – principally administration. Kascus perceived that this was and is a grave omission on the part of library schools. It is my contention that Kascus' findings are equally applicable to many library schools in the Commonwealth.

Using Africa as an example, Aina's 1994 examination of training the new information worker provides a number of useful clues on the training of information personnel in the Third World particularly with regard to distance librarianship. Reinforcing a point made earlier Aina states that *information, whether in the*

Photo 3. Unisa study material being received at the Dispatch Department
Courtesy: Unisa

raw form of empirical data or in the highly processed form called knowledge, has come to be regarded as a vital source necessary for the well being and security of human society... information is about the most neglected resource in Africa. It occupies the lowest stratum in the hierarchy of African priorities...where one would expect information to be given a very high premium, since it is critical to development. His observation that information workers in Africa are exposed to the traditional library skills of cataloguing, classification, reference and bibliographic services applies to many library schools around the Commonwealth – regardless of their location. Aina further states that *all these* [African] *schools have attempted to make their programmes relevant to the needs of Africa: however, no significant changes have taken place in the curricula of most of the schools to show that they are geared towards these needs.* This underscores the fact that new services, new clients as well as new and innovative measures such as distance services are not explored in many library schools. Informal queries made at a large distance teaching institution within Africa and one in New Zealand which offer library and information science via distance revealed ironically that distance librarianship was not included to any depth in their curricula. Aina opines that there is an inexhaustible demand for library and information graduates particularly if their programmes are radicalised and take into account the new skills that are needed. The radicalisation of the curriculum will also produce library and information science workers who will be able to make an important contribution to the development of their countries. Aina's statement that *they can only do this if a new and relevant system of training is developed* places the issue firmly in perspective.

The recommendations of Aina must not be taken lightly. I further postulate that no graduate from any library school in the last half of the last decade of the 20th century should graduate from library school without at least some basic exposure in distance librarianship. Ignorance and a lack of exposure to the many facets of distance librarianship practice on the part of many professionals is no longer acceptable. The universal application of distance education to all disciplines, for all ages and for a range of academic purposes determines that the principles of distance librarianship must be appreciated by all information providers. As the newest frontier of the profession, distance librarianship demands at least a basic understanding of its processes, procedures and differentiating practices.

Those currently pursuing library training will be the leaders of the profession in the early period of the 21st century. Distance education will be an integral part of the planning and educational landscape of the coming millennium. The effects of distance education on library services will mirror those that computers had on library and information services. Considerable curriculum reform was required. The impact of distance education on library services will be of a similar magnitude. Library schools must take cognisance of this development and its far reaching effects. Dilatory action by library schools on this matter could cause the profession to lose ground, in much the same way that it has with respect to computerisation and many aspects of nonprint services and uses.

CONCLUSION

The implications and impact of distance learning for libraries are significant. As distance education systems continue to gain credibility and recognition their importance as a means of providing quality education will continue to grow. Consequently libraries, librarians, library educators, library administrators and library providers must give to distance librarianship the support that is needed and required. Without this approach the skepticism with which a number of persons regard distance education will continue for some time. Additionally, the financial investment that distance education requires demands that all the necessary support services and systems are put in place and provided so that the investment will be a sound one. As populations continue to grow, and the demand for education rises and the demand for additional training and retraining expands, conventional systems will not be able to meet the increasing demands. Further, the luxury of being able to study full-time will become increasingly more difficult to support and therefore distance education will come fully into its own.

Distance librarianship demands that librarians find new and innovative methods to provide services. It also requires distance librarians to adapt and change old methods and processes to provide library and information services to their clients. Changing relationships and roles as well as a redefining of responsibilities are all a part of the distance education scenario. By extension these changes must and will have an impact on library services to distance learners. The potential of distance education is immense. Similarly, the effect of distance learning on the entire field of library and information science is without parallel. Professionals in library and information services are charged with a unique challenge. The future of the profession is challenged and presents challenges. Practitioners who respond to these developments will be involved in cutting edge activities. They will be participants in a process that will change the future of librarianship irrevocably.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Affleck, Del (1987). *A proposed model for the provision of library services to academic distance and other off-campus educational programmes in Saskatchewan.* Regina: University of Saskatchewan.

Aina, L.O. (1994). "The challenges of training the new information worker for Africa." *Librarian Career Development 2,* (2) 13-17.

Appavoo, Patricia (1989). *ACU Senior travelling fellowship report.* Athabasca: The author.

— (1985). *Library and information access in distance education: the role of technology.* Paper presented at the International Council for Distance Education, 13th World Conference, Melbourne, Australia, 13 - 20 August, 1985.

Association of College and Research Libraries. Guidelines for extended library services (1991). *ACRL Extended Campus Library Services Section. Manual for Officers and Committee Members.* Chicago: American Library Association.

Auger, Geoff (1990). Distance education in the Third World: critical analysis on the promise and reality. *Open Learning 5,* (2) 9-18.

Bazillion, Richard J and Connie Braun (1992). "Technology and library users automation outreach: library services to off-campus students." *Journal of Distance Education 7,* (2) 67-75.

Burge, E.J., J.E. Snow and J.L. Howard (1988). *Developing partnerships: an investigation of library-based relationships with students and educators participating in distance education in Northern Ontario.* Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and Contact Nord.

Cameron, Margaret (1988). "A full long spoon: library collections to serve external students." *Australian Academic and Research Libraries 19,* (4) 223-228.

Canadian Library Association. Library Services for Distance Learning Interest Group (1993). *Guidelines for library support of distance learning in Canada.* Ottawa: Canadian Library Association.

Carty, Joan (1991). *Library services for distance education students: adequacy of provision: the Open University, Australia and Canada.* Aberystwyth: University College of Wales. M.Lib. thesis.

Cavanagh, Anthony (1994). "The role of libraries in off-campus study." In T.D. Evans and D. Murphy (Eds.) *Research in Distance Education 3.* Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press.

Cleyle, Susan E. (1992). "Library bibliographic instruction: a challenge to deliver off-campus." *Journal of Distance Education 7,* (1) 109-113.

Clyne, Laurel and Ron Store (1983). "Library services in distance education: a survey of overseas institutions." *Riv Lib File 4,* (2) 24-40.

Crocker, Christine (1986). "Guidelines and guides galvanising the library service." In John Gray (Ed.) *Library services in distance education.* Proceedings of a National Seminar held by the South Australian College of Advanced Education and the University and College Section (SA) of the CAA at Adelaide University Staff Club, 22-23 August, 1985. Adelaide: South Australian College of Advanced Education.

Christine Crocker. (ed.) (1982). *Guidelines for library services to external students.* Ultimo: Library Association of Australia.

Fisher, Raymond K. (1988). *Library Services for adult and continuing education and independent learning: a guide.* London: Library Association.

Garrison, D. Randy and Doug Shale (eds.) (1990). *Education at a distance: from issues to practice.*

Going the distance: a handbook for developing distance degree programmes using television courses (1993). Washington: Anneburg/CPB Project.

Harry, Keith (1986). "Library support in the Open University." In John Gray (ed.) *Library services in distance education.* Proceedings of a National Seminar held by the South Australian College of Advanced Education and the University and College Section (SA) of the CAA at Adelaide University Staff Club, 22-23 August, 1985. Adelaide: South Australian College of Advanced Education Library.

Hayworth, D.E. (1982). "Library services to the off-campus and independent learners: a review of the literature." *Journal of Librarianship 14,*(3) 157-175.

Holmberg, Börje (1986). *Growth and structure of distance education.* London: Croom Helm.

Howard, Shelia (1985). "Libraries in distance education." *Canadian Journal of University and Continuing Education XI,* (I) 45-56.

Isaac, K.A. and G. Devarajan (eds.) (1989). *Libraries in distance education.* New Delhi: Ess Ess Publications.

Jackson, Miles M. (1983). "Distance learning and libraries in the Pacific Islands." *International Library Review 15,* (2) 177-184.

Jagannathan, Neela (1988). "Collection development at Andhra Pradesh Open University libraries." *Library Acquisitions: practice and theory 12,* (3/4) 281-296.

Jenkins, Janet (1994). *State of the art of post-secondary distance education in the United Kingdom.* Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. Paper presented the International Conference on Learning Beyond Schooling – Matching New Supplies and Demands.

John, Magnus (in press). "Library support – the missing link in support services at secondary level for the distance learners in English-speaking Africa." *Library services to distance learners in the Commonwealth: a reader.* Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

—— (1990). "Prospects for information services: provision for distance learning education systems in Africa." *Education in Africa – search for realistic alternatives.* London: Institute for African Alternatives.

Johnson, Richard (1986). Opening address. *Library services in distance education.* In John Gary (ed.) Proceedings of a National Seminar held by the South Australian College of Advanced Education and the University and College Section (SA) of the CAA at Adelaide University Staff Club, 22-23 August, 1985. Adelaide: South Australian College of Advanced Education.

Kascus, Marie A. (1994). "What library schools teach about library support to distance students." *American Journal of Distance Education 8,* (1) 20-35.

Kascus, Marie and William Aguilar (1988). "Providing library support to off-campus programs." *College and Research Libraries 49,* (1) 29-37.

Kinyanjui, Peter, and Augusta Morton (1992). *The role of teleconferencing in support of distance education: the case for developing countries.* Paper presented at the 16th ICDE World Conference, 8-13 November, 1992. Sukhothai Thamathirat Open University, Bangkok, Thailand.

LaBrake-Harrison, Lynn (1992). "Extended campus library services: guidelines or standards?" *Library Trends 39,* (4) 375-387.

Latham, S., A. Slade and C. Budnick (1991). *Library services for off-campus and distance education: an annotated bibliography.* Ottawa: Canadian Library Association.

Library Trends (1992) *39,* (4).

Library Trends (1995) *43,* (3).

Meacham, David and Afa. Shafeea Zubir (1992). *Models of distance education for developing island states.* Paper presented to the 16th ICDE World Conference 8-13 November, 1992. Sukhothai Thamathirat Open University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Mmari, G.R.V. (in press). "Library services for the Open University of Tanzania: experiences for the first year." *Library services to distance learners in the Commonwealth: a reader.* Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

Monroe, Margaret E. (1975). "Implications of the Open University for changes in library education." *Drexel Library Quarterly 11*, (2) 54-67.

Muldins, Valita (1986). "The William Merrylees Library and external students." *Library services in distance education.* In John Gray (Ed.) Proceedings of a National Seminar held by the South Australian College of Advanced Education and the University and College Section (SA) of the CAA at Adelaide University Staff Club, 22-23 August, 1985. Adelaide: South Australian College of Advanced Education.

Partridge, W.B.McD. (1988). *Low budget librarianship: managing information in developing countries.* London: Library Association.

Radford, Neil (1992). "Library services to external students: problems, responsibilities and the need for standards." *Library services in distance education.* In Christine Crocker (ed.) Proceedings of a National Workshop, Brisbane, June, 1981. Ultimo, NSW.: Library Association of Australia.

Shklanka, O. (1990). "Off-campus library services – a literature review." *Research in Distance Education 2,* (4) 2-11.

Snow, Judith (1987). *Library service to off-campus students: a review of the literature.* Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Steele, Beverley A. (in press). "Library services for The University of the West Indies distance students." *Library services to distance learners in the Commonwealth: a reader.* Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

—— (1994). *Library services in distance learning – the client's view.* Paper presented at the Commonwealth Library Association Workshop on Library Services to Distance Learners, Kingston, Jamaica.

Store, Ron (1980). "Library services in distance teaching: present realities and future possibilities." *Riv Lib File 2,* (1) 6-12

Watson, Elizabeth F. (in press). "Factors affecting the delivery of library services in Third World countries." *Library services to distance learners in the Commonwealth: a reader.* Vancouver: Commonwealth of Learning.

—— (1995). *Distance librarianship in the Third World: issues and challenges.* Paper presented at the Third World Conference, Governors State University, Chicago. Chicago: Third World Conference Foundation.

—— (1994). *Library services to distance learners: the macro issues.* Paper presented to the Commonwealth Library Association Workshop on Library Services to Distance Learners, Kingston, Jamaica.

—— (1993). "Library services to distance learners in Third World Countries: barriers to service." C. Jacob (Comp.) *6th Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings. Kansas City, Missouri.* Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University.

— (1992). *Library services to distance learners: a report.* Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

Wijesinghe, Malini N. (1988). "Provision of library resources for open university students in Sri Lanka." *Library Acquisitions: practice and theory 12,* (3/4) 297-302.

Williams, Esther W. (1986). "Distant libraries for distance education in the South Pacific." *Library Acquisitions: practice and theory 10,* (1) 55-66.

Wooliscroft, Michael (1995). Personal correspondence. Dunedin: University of Otago.

York, Vicky (1993). *A guide for planning library integration into distance education programs.* Boulder, CO.: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

THE DISTANCE LEARNER, THE LIBRARIAN AND THE COURSE DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Janet Jenkins

> *Dear Madam,*
>
> *I have been studying your course in social sciences for several months and I am writing to express my frustration. I find I cannot complete the work. A number of books are listed at the end of the course book, and I cannot manage to read any of them. My problem is that I can only get to the library in the local town on Saturdays, my day off. I am the policeman in my village, and unfortunately there is no bus on Saturdays, I do not have a car of my own, and so I have to walk. It is seven miles each way. The librarian has tried to get the books for me, but so far nothing that I need has been there when I go. I do not feel I can write my last assignment until I have done the reading. I have worn out three pairs of boots. Please advise me what to do.*

This is a reconstruction of a letter that once landed on my desk. It was 20 years ago, but it has stuck in my mind. It raised many issues that matter as much today as they did then.

One issue was centralisation, the difficulty faced by a distance teaching institution with no regional facilities in dealing with all aspects of learner support. Second, a lesson in clarity of presentation. The cobbler's (shoe-maker) bills were my fault – I was the course editor and was responsible for passing for publication a page with a list for **optional** background reading, which failed to communicate effectively with at least one learner. And, third, there was an issue of course design. The authors did not have a clear policy on reading – what was essential, what was optional – and that was reflected in the ambiguous presentation.

The reason the authors and editor got it wrong was that we did not think enough about the matter of books. And that in itself is an issue. Why was no librarian consulted if reading was important? The involvement, if any, of librarians in course development usually comes at the stage when course writers have made their decisions on reading. The librarian is asked to check the availability of books, more often than not at a distance, by being sent a list. Surely this risks more than giving students a raw deal; it risks bad course design.

How can this be so? Let us consider academic practice in a conventional university. A lecturer, sometimes a team of lecturers, plans a lecture course. There may be one or two set texts – essential reading – which, if they are not already easily available, will probably be purchased in bulk by the university book shop. Students will be expected to buy these. Some will, others will pick up second-hand copies from the previous year, yet others will manage somehow without purchasing a personal copy, using the university library or borrowing from friends. Then there will be other reading, probably an extensive course bibliography. Part of the student's education will be learning to use and select material from such lists. The librarian is likely to be given this list in advance – usually most titles stay on the list from year to year – and will make sure the titles are on the shelves. The lecturer will help the students to select, making references from time to time in the course of presentations, and from time to time slipping in additional titles, assuming the library will be able to help.

This system works reasonably well most of the time, even though libraries are often desperately short of funds. If the institution runs short of funds to buy new books, or there are large numbers of extra students so that copies run short, the students quickly let the lecturer know that books are not available and somehow adjustments are made. By and large lecturers know that the library will provide. They do not have to think about the service. They limit their concerns to choice of reading, not questioning how it will be provided.

Distance education is different. The first time an academic becomes involved in designing distance education, there are several new aspects of reading to become aware of. For many who think that reading widely is the essence of higher education, the concept of classifying reading according to importance – essential and background – is difficult to accept. Many feel uncomfortable with the idea of selecting one book as the most suitable for a course. They prefer to list a range of alternatives. It is equally difficult to accept that it is necessary to plan in advance what the students will read, with a view to clearing copyright for items which are to be reproduced in course readers.

These issues are little discussed. Much more attention is paid to questions of designing and developing learning material. These too are new activities for those embarking on distance education for the first time and rightly demand attention. But most distance courses rely on books. Only large autonomous distance teaching institutions regularly design some courses which stand free, perhaps accompanied by their own course reader of selected off-prints and articles. Most university-level distance courses comprise some form of study guide wrapped around a central textbook. It is usually unnecessary and always expensive to do otherwise.

There are dangers here. A situation can result where books are selected by lecturers with little reference to their availability or cost. Lecturers are unlikely to enquire of publishers about shelf-life. But a new updated edition of a textbook published just after a course has been published can kill it. There is also often vagueness about copyright matters relating to compiling readers, and no awareness that items must be selected early enough for clearance. Decisions are taken late, often too late for change to be comfortable.

There is a further issue here, that of costs to learners. An expensive book can be a severe burden on a student. Course teams need to look carefully at all possible alternatives before making a choice.

All too often it is only at the stage when problems occur that the librarian is called on the scene. It is clear to any librarian that their services are necessary at the course planning and design stage. But course teams are not aware of the need.

Most discussions on library services for distance education concentrate on services to students, bypassing what happens first. But there are two essential inputs prior to that. The first is providing services to course writers to support them in their discipline. That is a normal function of an academic librarian, and is almost invisible – lecturers expect to be provided with the latest books. The second is to provide advice to the team on a reading strategy for each course. This would be based on knowledge of the availability of and cost of recommended items or alternatives titles. Knowledge of the students' situations from the other activity of providing regular library support for distance learners. The librarian would also in many cases be able to provide an appraisal of any proposals from the team for the use of technology to deliver information to learners. Sometimes lecturers can be rather optimistic about the availability and accessibility of such options, while librarians whose business is information are usually well informed.

My argument is therefore that course teams need librarians as active members. How can this be brought about? Librarians will have to find the means to draw their services to the attention of new course teams. Perhaps the leverage comes with the performance of the first function, providing resource material to course writers. The proactive librarian could provide the team with a list of texts in print suitable for students in the subjects concerned.

In her section on the role of library service coordinator in *Roles and Competencies in Distance Education* (1993), O'Rourke draws attention to the arguments amongst distance educators about the presentation of reading when she writes *in an academic program, it is sometimes felt that learners should take the initiative to explore beyond the course materials provided.* I am sure that most academics see that the exploration, the ability and will to read widely is an essential component of a well rounded education. But there is too little exploration amongst academics teaching at a distance as to how they can best provide a reading environment for their learners. The boot trade still flourishes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

O'Rourke, Jennifer (1993). *Roles and competencies in distance education.* Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

REACHING THE REMOTE STUDENT

Margaret Appleton

INTRODUCTION

Distance education and other open learning systems of education create for remote students several disadvantages that students who study on a campus do not encounter. These disadvantages occur because of the distance from their institution of learning, the environment in which they are required to study or personal circumstances. Remote students because of their separation are unable to visit the library at their university, speak with their lecturers or tutors, enjoy direct consultation with library staff or hold regular and sustained discussions with fellow students. In addition, remote students cannot browse the academic collections of their university, they are unable to make personal selections from the library materials held by their university and they are forced to rely on others to make decisions on several aspects of their use of library and information materials. The separation they experience also denies them access to educational sessions on library use and information retrieval. Thus, distance education students are more dependent than other students on library staff for library services. The physical divide also makes it more difficult for the library to supply these students with library services.

In Australia many students are remote from their institution of learning because of where they live. Others who live in large cities are remote because they are unable, for personal or professional reasons, to visit the university where they are enrolled. Thus, to counteract these difficulties effective strategies to provide access to library and information services for distance students need to be deployed. The development of information literacy programmes and electronic library services are some of the strategies that can be used.

To date, many undergraduate courses taught by distance education have been developed as "self-contained" packages. These packages aim to include all the information resources and readings that are required by the student, reducing the need to develop contacts with libraries and their staff. This approach raises questions about students attaining competencies in library research as the search for information is executed for and not by them. Candy (1994) identifies information literacy as a key competency skill for lifelong learning. This examination of the importance of developing library and information skills advises that *the content of any tertiary course should include a mix of knowledge and technical competencies fundamental to the discipline, without which the graduate is unable to function as a professional in his or her field. But equally important is the awareness of how various fields, or bodies of knowledge, interconnect; an awareness that will only come if the students are encouraged to see life through wide-angled lenses... It is important, therefore, that graduates leave university equipped with the skills and strategies to locate, access, retrieve, evaluate, manage and make use of information in a variety of fields, rather than with a finite body of knowledge that will soon be outdated and irrelevant.*

The use of distance education to provide postgraduate training creates new and higher level needs for library and information services. The need to conduct library research, consult journal articles, reports and conference proceedings has introduced new dimensions to distance library services that cannot be addressed by pre-packaged materials.

Access to quality library resources and services is a critical factor in any academic programme of merit. This is of particular application to postgraduate courses and programmes. Packages of course readings to students in such programmes are no substitute for personal interaction in a library. Evidence suggests that the better course packages stimulate library research by students. Further evidence suggests that the higher the expectation of tutors regarding library use by students, the higher the level of library skills acquisition that occurs.

Academic institutions therefore have a responsibility to provide off-campus students with resources and facilities equivalent to those available to their on-campus peers. Libraries must facilitate the independent learning process whereby students can search for their own material. The development of academic research skills, particularly at the postgraduate level, is vital. To support the development of these skills opportunities must be provided for remote distance education students to have access to bibliographic tools, collections and trained staff.

In order to determine the library and information needs of remote postgraduate students and to ascertain how these needs can be satisfied, University of Central Queensland, in 1992, conducted a study and experimented with using electronic means to deliver library and information services to a representative sample. The first part of the study involved a national survey of remote postgraduate distance education students. The survey involved over 2,000 students from universities throughout Australia which offered postgraduate courses by distance education.

The objectives of the study were to:

- identify the library resource and information needs of remote postgraduate distance education students and to classify the needs by mode (coursework or research) and by field of study;
- investigate the innovative use of information technology to provide electronic access and delivery of information to remote postgraduate distance education students;
- study what services are being offered by libraries to remote postgraduate students;
- ascertain how libraries were promoting their services, and
- determine what additional costs were incurred to deliver services to remote students.

The study sought to identify the:

- needs of remote postgraduate students;
- specialised needs of research postgraduate students; and
- computing equipment that was available to students which would enable them to use electronic services.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Research-based vs course work programmes

Comparisons between research-based and course work students (a total of 12 cases) revealed that there were significant differences in the use of services by students in each group. Chart 1 is a graphic representation of the data collected. The analysis of the data indicated that the use of information services and journals by research students was higher than the level of usage by course work students in the population surveyed. These findings are significant for libraries as more staff time is needed to respond to requests of this nature.

Effects of the field of study on library and information services

The analysis of usage of services by students in different disciplines revealed that there were significant differences in library usage between the fields of study. Arts, Humanities and Social Science students were the heaviest users of most services. Education students ranked second. Business students, the second largest group in our survey population, ranked fourth in the overall analysis of use, based on the programme of study. Interestingly Business students used the following services more heavily than other students:

- loan of computer software
- fax requests
- answering machine
- 008 facility (toll-free telephone service)

University of Central Queensland

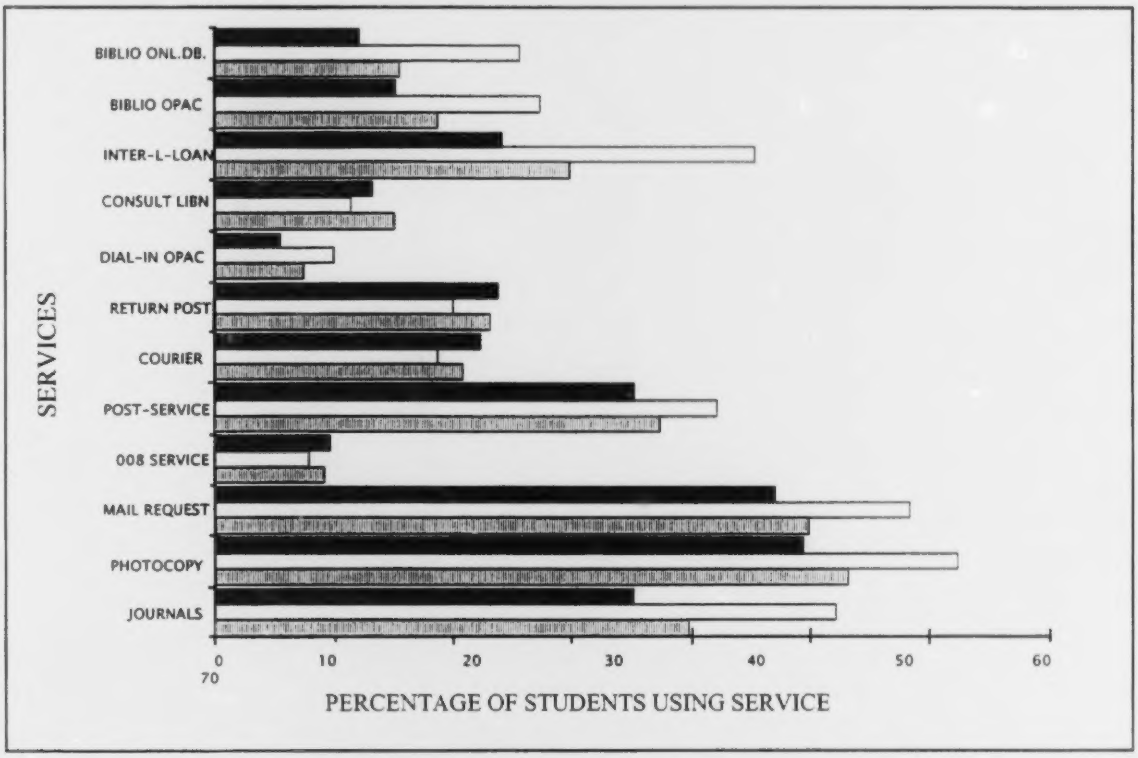


Chart 1. Use of library services by research-based and course work students*

KEY

■ Course work students
☐ Research-based students
▨ Total remote students

*NOTE: This chart represents those services which a chi-square analysis of the survey indicated different levels of significance in library usage between the different modes of distance study (course work and research).

- faxed photocopies.

The number of Engineering and Surveying students who participated in the survey was small. The analysis of responses from these students indicated that their usage of library services was low.

Access to library and information services

Students were asked five questions dealing with access to library resources and information services. Of the students surveyed, 28% had visited the library of their university of registration during 1992. Of these students, 62% had visited as part of a compulsory residential school and 74.5% said that it would have been helpful to have visited more often. The survey asked students if they had visited any other university or college libraries during 1992 to satisfy an information need related to their course. Of the replies received 67% gave a positive response. Of these, 77.2% were living less than 50 kilometres from the university/college library that they had used. More than half (52%) of these students visited these libraries more than five times in 1992.

Students were asked the reasons for using university or college libraries other than the library of the institution at which they were enrolled. Students used other libraries because they were closer (79.1%), they liked to choose items for themselves (47.5%), and found these libraries more convenient to access (34.5%). Other reasons given by the respondents were that the choice or range of material available at the alternative sites were more useful; that they were able to consult databases and that access to these collections was better than that available from their own library.

There are many other libraries and information networks used by distance education students. Most students responding to the survey (78%) used public libraries, although many of these students indicated that public libraries had very little material of real use to them. Special libraries were used by 29.4% of the students responding and private libraries (i.e., materials owned by colleagues and friends) were consulted by 29.9% of the respondents. Many of the special libraries used were located at the workplace of the student. These holdings were therefore more convenient to access and provided sources that were of value to work-related topics. Online searches and inter-library loans were also available at a number of the places of work of students. Also used by students were the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) college libraries. Such libraries were used by 23.6% of the students surveyed.

Electronic access

Our survey indicated that 85% of students had access to some type of computer and that 17% of them could access a modem. This corresponds with the findings of other surveys such as Gregor and Cuskelly (1992). The survey revealed that 54.5% of those surveyed had access to a facsimile machine and that 67.1% of them could access a video cassette recorder.

Specific needs of remote postgraduate students

Students were asked to indicate the difference between their needs for library and information services at the undergraduate level and postgraduate level. Most comments (61.2% responses) stated a need for journal articles, access to a greater range of journal articles, or access to journals. Other comments stressed the need for "specialised information", specialised resources, a greater range of material, a greater depth of information and access to research level material. Other concerns were the need for longer loan periods, an increase in the number of titles loaned, database searches, specialist help from librarians and fast access to library collections. Students commented that postgraduate students had limited time to access resources and conduct research.

One stated area of need was the development of information-searching skills. It was felt that this could be taught through the curriculum of courses offered. In association with lecturers, librarians could assist in the design of modules which would integrate the teaching of these skills with the content of the specific course. This would make the acquisition of such skills more relevant to the student and also it would be problem based and subject/topic orientated. Students would then develop information literacy skills in a relevant and practical manner supported by strong reinforcement tasks.

An analysis of the student services offered by the institutions surveyed revealed that:

- the majority of students are not aware of library services and resources available to them;
- many of the students surveyed had only studied by distance education and most were unaware of how to use the library effectively; and that
- distance exaggerated the problems of time and the need for fast delivery of services.

University of Central Queensland

RANK	COMMENT	COUNT	% OF RESPONSES
1	Need specialised information	189	10.8
2	Need journal articles	121	6.9
3	Need greater range of material	119	6.8
4	Need current information	113	6.5
5	Loans – require longer loan period	76	4.4
6	Require recent journal articles	63	3.6
7	Needs are not different	62	3.6
8	Need to search databases	54	3.1
9	Need greater range of journal articles	53	3.0
10	Need a greater range of information	50	2.9
11	Need access to more journals	47	2.7
12	Time limited	45	2.6
13	Need specialist help from librarians	44	2.5
14	Need greater depth of material	40	2.3
15	Need specialist resources	38	2.2
16	Need additional research materials	36	2.1
17	Need inter-library loans	34	2.0
17	Limited time to collect research if in employment	34	2.0
17	Loans – more books/materials	34	2.0
20	Students need to do own literature searches	27	1.5
21	Need fast access to library services	26	1.5
22	Need dissertations and theses	24	1.4
23	Need primary source materials	23	1.3
24	Need access to other library collections	22	1.3
25	Need assistance with literature searches	18	1.0
25	Need access to CD-ROM databases	18	1.0

Table 1. Library service needs of postgraduate remote students

Reasons for not using information and reference services offered by libraries

From the survey it was clear that students were not making full use of information and reference services offered by their libraries. For example, while dial-in access to the library catalogue was available to 24% of students, only 7% of those students had used the service. Of the students surveyed 48% indicated that "telephone reference assistance was available", yet only 23% had used it. Similarly 37% of students indicated their awareness of being "able to consult with subject librarians", yet only 15% had used this service. The differences in the proportions of availability and use of services were similar for most other facilities offered.

With every service, more than 14% of students indicated they had "no need" to use the available services. This was in addition to a number of students who said that the service was "not applicable" (i.e., their university does not offer this service), or that the service was "available from another source".

STUDENT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE LIBRARIES SURVEYED

Library services offered by Australian universities offering distance education can be summarised as follows:

Resources which can be requested:

Books, journals, photocopied materials, computer software and audiovisual software.

Library resources and information can be requested by:

Mail, fax, electronic mail, telephone, answering machine and 008 telephone facility (toll-free service).

Materials delivered by:

Post/surface, post/air, courier delivery, return postage paid by university library and faxed photocopies.

Information/reference services provided:

Printed library guides, dial-in access to library catalogue, telephone reference assistance, consultations with subject librarians and inter-library loans.

Bibliographic searches from:

Institution's library catalogue, online databases and CD-ROM databases.

It was interesting to note that from the list of services students stated they needed, all but one can be (or is already) provided as part of a standard distance education library service, i.e., the access to primary source materials.

To respond to the known and perceived deficiencies in providing library and information services to remote post graduate students the utilisation of technology was explored. Technology was deemed to be an appropriate mechanism to provide distance education students with library resources and services equivalent to those provided to on-campus students. Technology was also seen as being able to assist remote students to develop literacy skills similar to those acquired by their intramural peers. Technology, particularly computers, with the assistance of appropriate communication pathways was becoming more accessible to larger numbers of students. Student use of such technology would greatly enhance the quality of their learning and communications with staff, especially the library, thus reducing considerably the problems associated with distance and remoteness. As a result, the use of technology to provide library and information services to remote postgraduate students was tried.

ELECTRONIC LIBRARY SERVICES

Electronic communications and new technologies were examined with a view to delivering library services to students in a more timely manner, and giving remote students access to a greater range of resources and services. Electronic mail or E-mail was used as a part of a specific distance education project in which staff and students were required to communicate electronically. Cuskelly and Gregor (1992), who supervised the project did an evaluation and found that E-mail gave increased opportunities for quicker and more frequent feedback to students' queries. E-mail was found also to provide additional social dimensions to the learning context. Also discovered was the fact that E-mail reduced the feelings of isolation experienced by many distance education students. Previous research in using information technology for distance learning purposes has shown that it can be a very effective learning medium (Sweeney and Oram, 1992).

The provision of electronic access and delivery of information to remote postgraduate distance education students at the University of Central Queensland was tested over an 11-week period. Students were instructed how to use the library's E-mail system and were given access to it. Also available was dial-up access to CD-ROMs, the library's catalogue and external networks. Articles requested during the trial period were scanned and sent to students' E-mail boxes.

User education materials were made available to participating students. These included a video introducing the literature search process and sources of information and a computer-aided learning programme to teach students how to use the online library catalogue. The evaluation of services provided during the project revealed that there were a number of deficiencies in the documentation provided, that the user interfaces required improvement and enhancement. The results also indicated that students were prepared to use electronic communications but that they are easily frustrated if they do not connect to the communicating services quickly.

Cuskelly and Gregor (1993) in evaluating computer mediated communication found that over 64% of the students surveyed had difficulty in setting up the software/hardware to access E-mail, and that 69.5% of them had problems with understanding the documentation and applying the instructions supplied.

Using videos to teach students how to use information sources was also seen as an option. In addition, video was seen as a supportive medium to the paper and electronic materials used in distance education. Videos can demonstrate how to use the catalogue, how to exploit resources, how to conduct a literature search and can introduce students to special collections of materials or demonstrate particular library services. Because of the nature of this medium procedures and processes that require motion can be demonstrated very well. The impact of colour, visual images and close-up imagery make this a very forceful communicating and informing format.

At the University of Central Queensland a pre-course package was developed for distance education students. Students were invited to work through a package called *Getting Started* prior to pursuing *Science Information Sources*, a subject in the Master of Science Degree (Communication). The package prepared students for the subject. It provided them with material to enable them to access and search the library's catalogue, exposed them to the library's resources and instructed them how to request information. The package included a video, CAL programme on using the library catalogue, written instructions and communication software. This is a good example of a multi-media package being used to provide user education for a library.

Information searching skills need also to be taught through the course curriculum. Working with lecturers, librarians can assist in designing subjects which integrate the teaching of these skills with course content. Students then develop information literacy skills in a relevant and applied manner.

Another Australian university library is developing a user instruction programme which will be available to students through the university gopher. Technology is therefore assisting the remote student through a variety of ways to facilitate the delivery of user education programmes and information services.

As a means of providing library and information services to remote students the project was a success. Students commented positively on the services provided and the post-project survey showed that student use of the library increased during the period of the project.

This national survey disclosed a number of interesting and telling facts concerning library and information services to remote postgraduate students. Many of them were surprised at the range of learning support services that were available. Evident was that many students did not know what services libraries could provide. Some stated "if only I had known about these services when I started my course", and "the trial showed how ignorant I was of library services". Also indicated was that students were either not using the existing services or that these services were being under-utilised. Also apparent was that setting up a modem (i.e., configuring the modem to a personal computer) was not easy, and that students often required technical assistance for this task. The project also showed the need to re-examine and re-write the booting up procedures and instructions that were sent to the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the findings of the project the following recommendations were proposed:

- that user friendly interfaces be developed;
- that explicit and precise documentation needed to be written;
- that online tutorials to assist students needed to be available; and
- that librarians and information technology specialists need to work together to assist students and respond to student problems.

The need for further research was also indicated with regard to integrating electronic services to support student needs. Devising strategies to overcome resistance to accepting the use of technology is also needed. In addition, there are a number of practical difficulties that need resolution.

The development of user education materials to sensitize remote students to the wealth of resources that are available to them is also a requirement. The development of "generic" user education materials suitable for postgraduate students would assist all universities offering distance education programmes at this level to provide the necessary library and information services. Currently a CAL programme is being developed at University of Central Queensland to assist remote distance education students to search information databases. Students will have access to databases through services such as *Firstsearch, Current Contents, Carl/Uncover, or Citadel*; or access to CD-ROM databases through their library network. Remote students are unable to attend classes or easily ask for assistance with a search. The development of this interactive package will enable the remote student to learn database searching skills which will make their connect time with the remote database efficient and productive. To facilitate the use of the electronic services which are available, students need to acquire the necessary skills to use the hardware and software on which such systems and services are dependent.

Access to a "help-line" is one facility that is needed. This will connect students to the facilities and services that are valuable. Further a "help-line" will provide the opportunity to talk a student through a problem in real time.

REACHING THE REMOTE LEARNER

The remote learner needs to know what library services are available, how to use them, how to search for information and the range of sources and resources that are available in any discipline or field of study.

Research has demonstrated the need for clear documentation about services provided to the remote student, incorporating detailed explanations of the range of services that are available. The use of electronic communication is highly desirable but a number of facilitators need to be established to ensure ease of use. The development of interactive software and multimedia programmes which can be accessed remotely or given to the remote student will assist them to develop information literacy skills.

New technology is offering creative ways of providing user education to students at a distance. The library and information needs of remote students are extremely important. Such services are particularly vital at the postgraduate level. Librarians and others are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that every effort that can be made and every channel that can be used to supply the library and information needs of distance students are pressed into service in meaningful and supportive ways.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Appleton, M.E. (1993). *Library services for remote postgraduate distance education students.* A report to the Department of Employment Education and Training. Rockhampton: University of Central Queensland.

Candy, Philip E., Gay Crebert and Jane O'Leary (1994). *Report on the enabling characteristics of undergraduate education.* Canberra: Higher Education Council/Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee.

Cuskelly, Eve F. and Shirley D. Gregor (1993). "Perspectives in computer mediated communication." In T.D. Evans and D. Murphy (eds.) *Research in Distance Education 3.* Geelong, Vic. Geelong: Deakin University.

— (1992). *An investigation of situated learning in distance education through computer mediated communication.* ASCILITE'92 Proceedings, University of Technology, Sydney. Sydney: University of Technology.

Maxey, D.O. and S.J. Maxey (1986). "Computer/telephone pairing for long distance learning." *Educational Technology Systems 15,*(2) 201-211.

Mitcheson, B. (1990). "Distance technology for distance education: Macquarie University Library." *Libraries and Distance Education,* Nov., 4-5.

Sweeney, M.T. and I. Oram (1992). "Information technology for management education: the benefits and barriers." *International Journal of Information Management 12,* 294-309.

Van Dyk, Marie-Thérèse (1992). "ROMOTE: an off-campus dial-up service for CD-ROM databases." *LASIE 22,* (5) 148-155.

LIBRARY SERVICES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS: RESEARCH AND OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN A U.K. AND EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Peter Brophy, Deborah Goodall and Peter M. Wynne

INTRODUCTION

The British Open University is known across the world for the pioneering work it accomplished in the late 1960s and beyond to develop the concept of higher education delivery to students based off-campus, but other U.K. (United Kingdom) and European approaches are less well-known. Although no single model can be identified, the various higher education systems of European countries have over the last two decades started to pay more attention to distance education as they recognise the need for more cost-effective and appropriate ways of delivering education to students. The traditional model of the student physically studying at the university of his or her own choice, usually away from home, is thus being questioned.

There are many reasons for this interest. The recognition that learning is a lifelong process has led to the realisation that opportunities for learning must be provided within each individual's local area, often in the workplace itself, and that higher education cannot be exempt from this trend. Recognition of the potential of disadvantaged minorities has led to a re-examination of the ways in which lack of mobility, along with other factors, can affect access. Developments in technology have produced opportunities for delivering education that were undreamt of only a few years ago. The costs, including social costs, of participation in education have been highlighted and the need to find more cost-effective methods of delivery identified. The link between a skilled and highly trained workforce and national prosperity has been established. In Europe there has been a particular concern, through the European Union (the political structure which brings together currently 12 member states in what used to be known as the "Common Market"), to tackle the issue of Less-Favoured Regions – and educational opportunity is seen as a key tool in tackling the problems of these areas.

The role of libraries has received little attention from those developing new methods of educational delivery. It was the recognition of this problem that led the University of Central Lancashire in the UK, through its Centre for Research in Library & Information Management (CERLIM) to establish a programme of research and development into the delivery of library services to distant users. Much of this work, funded through the British Library and the European Union, has a distinctly international flavour. In this paper two specific projects are described and some early conclusions are drawn.

THE USERS

One of the key issues for libraries of all types is to develop their services to meet as closely as possible the needs of their actual and potential users. It follows that it is important to carry our research into user needs, and to increase our understanding of how users go about the tasks of identifying, locating and using information resources. In June 1993, CERLIM commenced work on a project entitled "Library Support for Franchised Courses in Higher Education" which had this objective within the area of distant users. In the U.K., "franchising" of higher education is well developed. Universities validate small colleges or other bodies to operate parts or even the whole of their degree courses, and students who are successful obtain the right to progress to the next stage of the course at the university itself, or may obtain a university qualification wholly within the franchised setting. It is accepted that the experience of students on these franchised courses will not be identical to that of their on-campus colleagues, but it must be**equivalent** – and the qualification awarded must be of equal value and distinction.

The issue of library resources for students on franchised courses is a live one. Universities have paid considerable attention to it, yet again and again course reviews have highlighted the deficiencies that exist in this area. This research was therefore considered both relevant and timely, and the British Library's Research and Development Department agreed to fund it for a two-year period commencing in June 1993.

The research itself has encompassed two major areas: First there was a survey of franchise activity in the U.K. from perspectives of the franchiser (i.e., the university) and the franchisee (i.e., the local college). Secondly, individual students have cooperated by recording their information-seeking and using activities in relation to particular pieces of work. These two aspects are described in more detail below.

The surveys of franchising and franchisee institutions revealed a large body of information, of which the following are critical points:

1. There are few formal mechanisms in place to enable the library to contribute to the franchising process. The overwhelming impression is that much of a college libraries' effectiveness depends on the strength of the informal networks of individual librarians.

2. Librarians are often not informed of new proposals to run franchised courses at an early stage. In some colleges internal links between teaching and library staff are not good and in more than one case the librarian's professional judgement was clearly ignored by teaching staff who just don't understand why we should be involved.

3. There is considerable dissatisfaction with library contributions to the validation process, i.e., the formal events at which a university examines a college proposal to run a franchised course and decides whether or not to approve it. Typical comments from librarians were:*It's a waste of time my going as I'm not able to comment*; *The teaching staff speak on my behalf, without any informed knowledge but you've got to give a good impression*; *They are preoccupied with improving the numbers of books and they don't tackle the wider issues such as the place of information skills in the HE student experience*.

4. Once courses have been validated and begin to recruit students, it is unfortunately the exception rather than the rule for students to receive specific information skills training. There are particular problems with part-time courses which run in the evenings, when no professional library expertise may be available. However, there **are** many examples of good practice to be found in individual colleges.

5. The introduction of higher education courses in colleges has almost universally had some beneficial effects on the college library's funding and stock. It is not uncommon for the validation of the course to be made dependent on the provision of specific amounts of funding for the library, although continuity of that funding can become a problem. Again, the introduction of higher education courses has sometimes provided the impetus for major improvements to the library service as a whole – for example, the introduction of a computer system, some expansion of space, or even in one or two cases the recruitment of a professional librarian for the first time. In these ways the impact of the franchised courses can be beneficial to the college community as a whole.

A paper describing the findings of this part of the study, in relation to the University of Central Lancashire's partner colleges, appeared in *Library Management* (Goodall, 1994a).

The second part of this research project has looked at the actual experience of individual students in seeking and using information and library services in order to undertake academic assignments. Although this work is still continuing the research methods devised for it have provoked considerable scholarly interest. It is notoriously difficult to track the way in which students use libraries and information, and all kinds of techniques have been employed by researchers. It was decided to use a diary method after careful consideration of the alternatives, and the diaries themselves were designed with great care following detailed discussion with experts in other fields.

Approximately 120 full-time and part-time students, mainly in the first year of a range of courses at three universities and six colleges, were invited to complete diaries to record library use concerning specific pieces of assessed work throughout the academic year. The aim was to document the actual experience of the students in relation to the provision and availability of library resources, to provide a clear understanding of how students satisfy their information needs (including those met by using resources other than libraries) and to look at the strategies adopted – are franchised students disadvantaged compared to on-campus colleagues?

Students who took part in the study completed three to four diaries and attended follow-up discussions: at the end of the exercise received a £25 "thank you" fee. But even with this inducement there were problems in recruiting a sufficient sample. Whilst few, if any, students have admitted that they would not have taken part in the study without the fee there seemed also to be a contradictory feeling that the fee implied that there would be a lot of work in completing the diaries! Additionally, the target sample was primarily first-year students as, it is assumed, they have fewer preconceptions about academic library services. However, it is quite difficult to make meaningful contact with these students at the beginning of term. Further details of the methodology employed can be found in a paper which appeared recently in *Library and Information Research News* (Goodall, 1994b).

The results of these diary exercises are still being analysed at the time of writing, but it is notable that students are using a very wide range of sources for the information they require. Far from concentrating exclusively on the academic library, students turn to public libraries, to friends and colleagues, to their tutors and to many other sources. As the project enters its second year, we will be examining the "map" of these sources and information strategies and relating them to the formal services with which students are provided.

THE USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The BIBDEL Project, the full title of which is "Libraries without Walls: the delivery of library services to distant users", began in March 1994 and involves three university libraries working together to explore the delivery of library and information services "at a distance" through the use of information technology. Each partner is investigating particular services, from catalogue access to enquiry-handling, and the related library and information management issues.

The work is inspired by the need to provide higher education to remote communities throughout Europe. Advanced study requires access to library materials and services which are not locally available, and the project partners are developing demonstration experiments to explore ways in which libraries might provide the resources and services enjoyed by students and academic staff in more densely populated areas. A common feature of the demonstration experiments is that they only use readily available, "off-the-shelf", information technology products connected together to facilitate library access.

The project is part-funded by the European Commission and will last for 18 months. It involves the University of the Aegean in Greece, Dublin City University in the Republic of Ireland and the University of Central Lancashire (the coordinating partner) through the Centre for Research in Library and Information Management.

The Library at the University of Central Lancashire builds on current links with franchise colleges throughout Lancashire and Cumbria. One of these, the Cumbria College of Agriculture and Forestry at Newton Rigg near Penrith in northwest England, is located in a sparsely populated area. Newton Rigg College has recently begun to offer a selection of higher education and degree courses and, though the College has a well-stocked library in its specialist areas, students on these higher programmes must travel considerable distances if they wish to use advanced materials and services in other academic libraries. The challenge to be tackled is to provide the small college library with direct support from the university library through access to the catalogue, document delivery and easy routes to subject specialist librarians for enquiries and advice.

The heart of the demonstration experiment will be a personal computer situated in the library at Newton Rigg. This machine will be connected to the University of Central Lancashire's academic computing network by means of a relatively unsophisticated communications application and a high-speed modem. Students will be able to dial into the university and gain access to the library's Dynix OPAC. The remote students will be registered as ordinary university library users and will be able to carry out catalogue, loan record and reservation enquiries. Books requested by them will be issued and returned by post.

Also by means of the remote link, students will be able to use a selection of CD-ROM databases, both bibliographic and full-text, which have already been networked in the university library. Of these, the full-text newspaper files are expected to prove particularly popular. It will be possible to search the CD-ROMs remotely, to save relevant references in text files and to print the saved files at the remote site. An academic publisher, MCB University Press, has provided electronic versions of some of its journals for experimental purposes within the project.

Enquiries to library staff will also be possible by means of the electronic mail module of the university library's Dynix system. Students at Newton Rigg will be able to address enquiries to staff with appropriate subject expertise, who in turn will be able to answer by fax or by E-mail, as each remote student will have a unique E-mail identifier.

Close monitoring of the use of the remote link will be undertaken by Newton Rigg's own librarian and the BIBDEL Project Research Fellow.

The Irish National Distance Education Centre is a faculty of Dublin City University (DCU), and the University's library is exploring the needs of distance learners throughout Ireland who would rarely have the opportunity to use the library service in person.

DCU's demonstration experiment will allow a group of some ten distance education students, who already have personal computers, to access the services of the university library from their homes throughout Ireland. The experiment will equip each student with a modem and communications software developed commercially by a Dublin software house. Users will be able to access library services similar to those offered in the University of Central Lancashire research project, but it is the intention of the Irish experiment to explore the possibility of the delivery of requested materials by electronic scanning and file transfer.

Students at the University of the Aegean already have their own problems of library access. Departments and faculties are distributed over four Greek islands, each with a small library covering the subjects taught there, and each of the four OPACs contains only its own library's materials. Course contents are increasingly overlapping as subjects become more inter-disciplinary, and the subject/island libraries need to be linked together to support the curricular needs of students and the research needs of academic staff.

The Greek demonstration experiment will initially connect all four OPACs, so that students in any faculty library will be able to access the catalogue in any other. Document supply among the four islands will be coordinated from the main library on the island of Mytilene. Later, library users will also be able to access the catalogues of other academic libraries on the Greek mainland.

The management issues to be addressed in the project include library staff training, user needs identification and education, the scope for cooperation between libraries, cost-effectiveness of IT used in these situations, and any resulting cost benefits.

A key item on the project's agenda is to disseminate interesting and good practice. An international seminar is planned for the spring of 1995 to share experiences with colleagues throughout the European Community, and a special interest group may be established. There will also be a series of toolkit technique reports on aspects of managing the delivery of library and information services, and a formal report on the project as a whole.

CONCLUSION

It is still too early to draw definite conclusions from the two ongoing research projects. However, both of them have already demonstrated that there is considerable scope for improving library services to distant users by developing a clearer understanding of those users' needs and their information-seeking behaviour, and by adapting novel approaches, especially IT based approaches, which are specifically designed to obviate the known problems of distant students.

There can be little doubt that distance education is set to expand throughout the world. At the University of Central Lancashire we are pursuing a research and development strategy to enable information and library services to meet the ever-changing needs of students studying off-campus to assist the distance education concept to become a successful experience of higher education. Older methods of delivering services will have to be employed alongside the new to find the blend of service which meets needs most effectively. For this reason we see a continuing need to undertake research in these areas, and thus to establish the contribution of library and information professionals to what has been a neglected field.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brophy, P. (1993). "Franchising higher education: the library's role." In C. Jacob (Comp.) *6th Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Kansas City, Missouri, October 1993*. Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University.

Goodall, D. (1994a). "Franchised courses in higher education: implications for the library manager." *Library Management 15,* (2) 27-33.

— (1994b). "Use of diaries in library and information research." *Library & Information Research News 18* (59) 17-21.

DISTANCE LEARNERS AND LIBRARY USE IN WESTERN CANADA: THE FINDINGS OF AN INTER-UNIVERSITY SURVEY

Alexander L. Slade

INTRODUCTION

The most common method of providing library services to distance learners in Canada is through what Slade (1988; 1994) describes as an outreach service. A centralised support unit established within the institutional library forms the basis of the typical outreach service. These units are designed to receive requests from students by telephone, mail and fax. Staff within the units collect the requested materials or information and send items directly to the students. All services are well publicised in brochures, handouts, course materials and other institutional publications. Most outreach services are coordinated by a librarian with a number of support staff to handle the day-to-day operations. Many of these services have distinctive names to emphasise that their focus is student support at a distance. Examples of these names are Telebook (Simon Fraser University), Dial-A-Book (University of British Columbia), INFOLINE (University of Victoria), and U.READ (University of Regina). The features of these outreach services are similar to the key ingredients described by Slade (1987) and the categories established for the Second Canadian Off-Campus Library Services Survey (Slade, 1988). The need for such services is articulated in the *Guidelines for Library Support of Distance Learning in Canada* (Canadian Library Association, 1993).

Canada has two main forums for librarians who are involved in serving distance learners. One is the Distance Learning Interest Group of the Canadian Library Association. This group publishes a semi-annual newsletter and holds meetings and workshops as part of the Canadian Library Association conferences. The other group is the Distance Learning Forum of the Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries (COPPUL). The focus of this latter group is upon issues relevant to distance learning and information about local developments in the western Canadian provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

At a meeting of the COPPUL Forum in 1992, it was suggested that a joint survey be undertaken to evaluate the outreach services of the respective member institutions. A recommendation was also put forward that it would be useful to collect some information on the library use patterns of distance learners. Several members of the Forum indicated an interest in participating in this proposed project. Each interested member agreed to develop a list of the information that they would like to see collected in such a survey. Slade of the University of Victoria in British Columbia volunteered to receive the various lists, amalgamate the topics and develop a questionnaire that could be used by all participating institutions.

After the Forum meeting and before the project developed any further, a number of events influenced the members' participation in the survey. COPPUL at that time was undergoing reorganisation and a strategic planning exercise. As a result, the COPPUL Executive decided that the Council was not in a position to sponsor the survey formally at that time. This development discouraged a few members from participating in the survey. In addition, a few other members realised that they did not really have the time or resources to conduct the survey. Once the various members had clarified their positions, six institutions agreed to carry on with the survey as an independent group. This group included three universities from British Columbia (University of Victoria, University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University), two universities from Saskatchewan (University of Saskatchewan and University of Regina), and one from Manitoba (University of Manitoba).

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The scope of the survey was refined by the COPPUL members who were involved. They decided to conduct telephone interviews with a sample of 15 students from each institution. The survey sample was to be drawn from students who had requested assistance from the various outreach services within the past 12 months. Since one of the main objectives of the survey was to determine the extent of students' satisfaction with the library support provided by the outreach service of their institution, it was decided to exclude students who were non-users of the outreach services.

A second objective of the survey was to determine the extent of the students' use of local resources for course purposes. All six outreach services are designed to provide comprehensive library support for distance learners. Users can borrow books from the main libraries, receive copies of periodical articles, request reference assistance and literature searches as well as accessing inter-library loan services. In response to a telephone call, letter, or fax, library materials are sent directly to the student's home. There is generally no charge for these off-campus library services. In view of the availability of these services, the survey coordinating group wanted to know if their users depended entirely on the outreach services or whether the students also attempted to locate information through local libraries or other sources. The basic question to be answered was: "Are distance learners motivated to seek out library information from local sources when they have full access to the resources of their university library through an outreach service?"

Based on an amalgamation of the lists received from the participating members, Slade developed a standard questionnaire to be used by all six institutions. Approximately half of the questions pertained to the students' use of local resources and the other half concentrated on the students' satisfaction with their respective outreach service. A draft version was sent to the other five members for comment and revision before the questionnaire was finalised in the spring of 1993.

The survey coordinating group developed several criteria for selection of the students to be interviewed. In order to achieve a homogeneous population from six institutions, the members decided not to use random selection. Since some of the participating institutions had graduate students in off-campus programmes and others did not, it was decided that all interviewees were to be enrolled in undergraduate courses. They were to be selected partly on the basis of geographical location and partly on the basis of the courses in which they were enrolled. The intention was to represent as wide a variety of towns and cities as possible and as many different courses as possible. Distance students who lived in the same city as the university itself were excluded in order to concentrate on the non-metropolitan areas.

The following instructions were given to each member of the survey group:

- Choose 15 different undergraduate courses from your file of requests received from off-campus students in the past 12 months. If you do not have 15 different courses, select the maximum number you have represented in your files.
- Choose 2 different individuals from each of those courses. Do not select a student on the basis of any personal knowledge of the individual or their library use patterns. If you have less than 15 courses represented, choose an appropriate number for each course to bring your total number of students to 30.
- If any of the students selected live in the same city as your university, delete those students from your sample and choose alternative names from the same course.
- If both students selected from a course live in the same city or town, delete one name and choose another student who lives in a different location.
- Next, arrange all 30 students by the city or town in which they live. If you have more than two students from the same city or town, take the names of those students back to your files and try to select by course other students who live in different locations.
- At this point you should ideally have a list of 30 different individuals representing 15 different courses and at least 15 different cities or towns.

- Since you will be sampling only 15 students, organise your list of names by course and call the first name on your list from each course. If that person is unavailable or does not wish to participate in the survey, try the second student selected for that course. If both students from the same course are unavailable or unwilling to participate, go back to your files and randomly choose another student from that course (ensure that the alternative student does not live in the same city as your university).
- By the end of the survey you should have called 15 different students representing 15 different courses (or the maximum number of courses represented in your files if your total of courses is less than 15).

The telephone interviews took place in April and May 1993. Explicit instructions were given to each interviewer to ensure a consistent approach to asking the same questions of each student. In total, 90 off-campus students from six universities were interviewed in the survey.

SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

The questionnaire contained 26 questions. The survey deliberately did not include any questions on demographics or student profile characteristics. The interviewers were given the option of collecting that information at the end of the questionnaire if they felt it would be useful to their institution.

The following section lists a selection of the interview questions with a summary of the responses to those questions.

- *In addition to our library service, did you use any other libraries for course purposes in the past 12 months?* (72% of the respondents answered "yes" to this question.)
- *Which types of libraries did you use for course purposes in the past 12 months?* (The top three responses were public libraries (61%), school libraries (27%) and college libraries (21%).)
- *Which type of library did you use the most?* (The top three responses were public libraries (30%), college libraries (14%) and school libraries (12%).)
- *Please indicate what difficulties you encountered in using the type of library identified in the previous question.* (The top three responses were inadequate holdings (48%), inconvenient opening hours (28%) and lack of appropriate periodical indexes (20%).)
- *In the past 12 months, have you ever made a special trip of more than 20 miles (32 kilometres) to visit a library to do research for course purposes?* (37% of the respondents answered "yes" to this question.)
- *Do you have access to a computer and modem at work or at home?* (26% of the respondents indicated they had access to both a computer and modem, 41% said that they had a computer but no modem, and 33% stated that they had neither a computer nor a modem.)
- *Have you searched the computerised library catalogue of our university for course purposes in the past 12 months?* (20% of the respondents answered "yes" to this question.)
- *Would you like to receive some information on how to access and search the computerised catalogue of our university?* (73% of the respondents answered "yes" to this question.)
- *Please indicate if you have used any non-library sources to obtain information for course purposes in the past 12 months.* (The top three responses were books and papers borrowed from friends, colleagues, or classmates (81%), bookstores (60%) and interviews with local officials or other individuals in the community (57%).)
- *Please rate the general usefulness of our library service for your course purposes during the last 12 months. Use the scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being least useful and 5 being most useful.* (66% of the respondents gave their service the highest rating (5), 22% gave the service the second highest rating (4) and 12% of the students used the ratings 1, 2 or 3.)
- *What one aspect of your experience with our service most influenced your answer to the above question?* (The top three responses were efficiency/convenience of the service (33%), speed of service/fast turnaround time (28%) and useful selection of material received (20%).)

- *Please indicate which factors were a problem or inconvenience for you when you used our library service.* (The top three responses were specific titles not available (44%), loan period too short (34%) and slow turnaround time to receive material (29%).
- *If you continue to take off-campus courses from our university, do you feel that you would benefit from having a library handbook or other instructional material designed to assist you in doing library research?* (74% of the respondents answered "yes" to this question.)

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS: USE OF LOCAL RESOURCES

One of the main objectives of the survey was to answer the question: "Are distance learners motivated to seek out library information from local sources when they have full access to the resources of their university library through an outreach service?" The data collected in the survey indicates that the answer is "yes" . In addition to using the library outreach service of their university, the majority of the interviewed students took the initiative to use local libraries and obtain information for course purposes from a variety of non-library sources.

Other Canadian studies have shown that distance learners naturally tend to turn to public libraries to obtain information and materials for their off-campus courses (Slade, 1991a). In a survey to assess the library needs of part-time students at Queen's University and Trent University in Ontario, Orton and Wiseman (1977) found that public libraries played an important role for the students in locating information. Latham (1987) found that 35% of the students surveyed in her Alberta Chinook Educational Consortium study used public libraries at least monthly for course purposes.

In another Alberta study, Appavoo and Hansen (1989) collected data on the library use patterns of Athabasca University students. Since Athabasca University delivers courses entirely by distance education methods, the institution has a well-developed library outreach service. Despite this, Athabasca students reported that they used public libraries more frequently than the outreach service. The only exceptions were in regions of northern Alberta and in other provinces where public library collections were less developed.

Burge, Snow and Howard (1988) conducted a study on library use in Northern Ontario and found that distance learners in that region were also frequent users of public libraries. *A significant number of respondents report that they use the reference collection of the local public library monthly (12.8%) or every two months (13.9%); they borrow an item from the public library monthly (9.9%) or every two months (16.2%)* (Burge, Howard and Snow, 1988).

Studies in other countries confirm that distance learners tend to be users of local libraries (e.g., Grosser and Bagnell, 1989; Miller, Johnson and Shorland, 1984). The data from the western Canada survey supports the notion that distance learners value self-sufficiency in information retrieval and often make an effort to locate library materials in their own communities. A significant number of distance learners in the western Canada study (37%) also travelled more than 20 miles (32 kilometres) to visit a library for course purposes. The publicised availability of an outreach service from the library of their parent institution does not seem to dissuade off-campus students from making these efforts.

The difficulties in using local libraries mentioned by the students in the western Canada study are consistent with the findings of Orton and Wiseman (1977) and Latham (1987). Limited opening hours and lack of relevant holdings are the two main complaints of students in both studies. However, these factors do not seem to discourage the students totally since many of them continue to use local libraries despite the limitations. One possible explanation for this persistence is that distance learners value the process of information-gathering, regardless of the success of the search. In a recent British study, one distance student comments on using a library in person: *I began to really feel like a student whereas before on my own at home studying the materials I couldn't really believe I was a university student. Being in the library is really important to me* (Unwin, 1994).

Adult education theory can provide another possible explanation for the students' wish to be partly autonomous in their learning activities. The majority of distance students are adults over the age of 25 who have work and family commitments (Slade, 1991a; Parry, 1994). As adults with a series of life experiences behind them, these students tend to value their perceived independence and are used to assuming responsibility for their own accomplishments and successes. Consequently, they may feel that they should assume responsibility for locating certain course information rather than relying entirely on an external delivery service. The western Canada survey did not attempt to determine the students' motives for being self-sufficient in course research. This area would be worthy of exploration in a future study.

A surprising finding in the western Canada study was that the distance learners' self-sufficiency in information-gathering was not limited to libraries. The findings demonstrate that these students tend to use a wide variety of non-library sources to obtain information for course assignments. Most of the respondents (81%) reported that they borrowed personal copies of books and documents from friends, colleagues and classmates. More than half of them (60%) reported that they used bookstores for course purposes and 57% indicated that they conducted interviews with local officials or other individuals in the community. Orton and Wiseman (1977) also found that the students in their survey used bookstores for course purposes. **It was most interesting to find that 58.8% of the respondents indicated that the purchase of books was the main source of readings** (Orton and Wiseman, 1977). These results imply that distance learners tend to be community-oriented in their search for course information and explore the full range of local resources in addition to using outreach services from the institutional library.

At present, one of the most significant topics in library services for Canadian distance learners is the issue of remote access to online library catalogues and other electronic resources (Slade, 1994). The western Canada survey attempted to discover the extent to which students were able to take advantage of remote access. Only 26% of the respondents reported having access to both a computer and modem for remote dial-in to their university's catalogue. Twenty percent indicated that they had searched their institution's online library catalogue in the past 12 months. However, only 7% of the students had searched this catalogue from their home or office. The remaining 13% had searched the catalogue during a visit to another library. When asked if they would like to receive some information on how to access and search the online catalogue of their university, 73% replied "yes".

These findings reveal that there is still a long way to go in providing distance learners with remote access to electronic resources in western Canada. One challenge ahead is for distance learning providers to motivate their students to acquire computers with modems and appropriate communications software. A challenge for university librarians is to encourage local libraries to provide distance learners with online and access via the Internet to university catalogues. This would enable students who lack the appropriate equipment to conduct library searches with more independence. A further challenge is for librarians from the home institution to provide distance students with adequate instructions and information on how to access and search the online systems available by remote dial-in or through a local library.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS: EVALUATION OF OUTREACH SERVICES

The majority of the distance learners interviewed in the western Canada survey appeared to be satisfied with the outreach library services provided by their respective home institutions. When asked to rate the usefulness of the service, 66% of the respondents gave their service the highest rating (5) and a further 22% gave it the second highest rating (4). Only 12% of the respondents appeared to be somewhat dissatisfied with service from the home institution (ratings 1, 2 or 3).

The factors which most influenced the students when rating the service of their home institution were the speed of the turnaround time, the provision of a useful selection of material and the efficiency or convenience of the service. An implication from these results is that students need to be convinced that an outreach service really works for them. Distance learners who discover that their outreach service does deliver useful material in a short time become rapid converts to the system.

In the general comments section of the survey, many students expressed praise and appreciation for their respective outreach services. The most significant factor for the students seems to be the turnaround time to receive library materials. Many off-campus and distance education courses have short deadlines for assignments and speed of delivery is important for the student facing these time pressures. The students who did experience delays from their outreach service were quick to comment on that disadvantage while the students who received material in a prompt manner emphasised their appreciation and gratitude.

One difficulty received considerable attention from the respondents. Fory-four percent of the students expressed frustration that some recommended titles were in use or not available from the library. This situation reflects an ongoing challenge in distance learning library services, i.e., the distribution of course reading lists that include titles not owned by the library or only available as a single copy. Much to the dismay of outreach librarians, many distance education courses are developed without consultation with library staff. As a result, the outreach services are often placed in a reactive position, i.e., trying to order additional materials at the last minute or attempting to find substitutes for the students when the recommended titles are not available. Various authors (e.g., Burge, Snow and Howard, 1988; Slade, 1991b) advocate a proactive approach to distance learning library services, including consultations with faculty, instructors and course designers in advance of the courses being offered.

Another inconvenience noted by the respondents (34%) was that some loan periods are too short. In many cases this is an unavoidable problem if an outreach service is trying to circulate a limited number of copies of a recommended monograph to a large number of off-campus students. The situation is often complicated by the delivery time since books can take at least a week to be delivered to students and the same amount of time to be returned. This time in transit often reduces the loan period available to distance learners. The only ways to avoid this situation are to improve the delivery method or acquire multiple copies of high-demand titles that can be loaned for longer periods. However, these solutions have significant cost implications and may not be feasible for many institutions. This is another area where proactive consultation with course personnel can prove useful. The librarian in charge of the outreach service may be able to suggest alternative titles for course reading lists to permit longer loans. The librarian may also be able to persuade the course providers to contribute to the purchase of additional copies of selected titles or to the cost and use of courier services for faster delivery.

Publicity is one of the key features defining a library outreach service for distance learners (Slade, 1988; 1991a). Students need to be informed in a consistent manner of the availability of the service and how they can access it. Some outreach services advertise through separate handouts or brochures, some rely on information printed into course materials, and others use a combination of both approaches. Most of the institutions represented in the western Canada survey provide printed information about their outreach service to off-campus students on a regular basis. The data revealed that 50% of the respondents rated the information received to be very useful (5) and a further 26% rated the information as quite useful (4). Suggestions for improvement of the printed publicity included more information about remote access to the online catalogue, more emphasis that literature searches are available by request, and more prominence of library information in course guides.

The majority of respondents in the survey expressed an interest in learning more about library research, again confirming their wish to be self-sufficient in information-gathering. Students were asked if they would be interested in receiving a library handbook designed for off-campus students. A substantial number of respondents (74%) replied that they would indeed be interested in acquiring such a handbook. Most students (59%) indicated that they would be willing to pay for this type of handbook. The most frequently quoted acceptable price was (Can.) $10.00. These responses identify a need for more library-oriented instructional materials for Canadian distance learners. Some institutions have prepared videotapes on library use for their distance learners (Fu, 1987; Cleyle, 1992). However, very few library handbooks for off-campus students exist in Canada at present. The perceived need for these handbooks relates to the need for more information on remote access. Outreach librarians will eventually have to develop some form of instructional material to enable distance learners to take advantage of the growing number of electronic resources available for library research.

At the end of the survey, students were given an opportunity to provide some open-ended comments on their outreach service or other library matters. A gratifying 27% concluded the interview by expressing their appreciation for the existence of the service. The helpfulness of the staff was also acknowledged by several respondents. While some students found aspects of the library support to be inconvenient or frustrating, all 90 respondents confirmed the value of the various outreach services and none indicated any intention of discontinuing use of their service.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The western Canada survey is the first of its kind to be conducted as an inter-university project. The literature on library services for distance education contains numerous reports of single institutional studies, area studies, and the occasional cooperative project (e.g., Orton and Wiseman, 1977). However, there is no record to date of six or more institutions collaborating on the same survey of their off-campus students.

The results of this inter-university survey indicate that distance learners in western Canada have similar library use patterns and similar concerns about using an outreach service. Since the distance learners in this study were all located in rural or non-metropolitan areas, the findings may be generalised to other parts of Canada with similar demographic conditions. However, the survey findings may not be applicable to an area of the country such as southern Ontario which is densely populated and has numerous academic institutions. Many of the distance learners in that region are able to use a university library in person. A few universities and colleges in other regions of Canada still do not have fully developed outreach services for their distance learners. Some of the survey findings will not apply in those regions either because the students have to rely entirely on local libraries or collections deposited from the home library at a local centre.

To summarise the survey findings, the following generalisations can be made about distance learners in the non-metropolitan areas of Canada.

Regardless of the availability of a library outreach service from the home institution, the average distance student uses local libraries for course purposes. Public libraries are the first choice, but school, college and government libraries are also used to varying degrees. The choice of other libraries is partially dependent on the programme in which the student is registered. Students taking education courses tend to use school libraries, students taking nursing courses visit hospital libraries, students taking general arts courses gravitate towards the public library (or college library if one is nearby). The average distance student makes at least ten visits per year to a library for course purposes. Most distance students find the hours of opening and the holdings of local libraries to be unsatisfactory. However, they continue to use these facilities in an effort to be partly self-sufficient in their course work.

As part of the effort at self-sufficiency, the average distance learner does not rely entirely on library sources for course assignments. This student explores non-library resources in the community, collecting verbal information from local officials and other significant individuals, visiting agencies and government offices to locate unpublished materials and documents, borrowing books and papers from friends and colleagues in addition to purchases from bookstores.

The average distance student does not own a computer with a modem. Of those students that do own such equipment, very few have tried to dial in to the home library's online catalogue. Some students find access to these catalogues through a local library. However, not many distance students know how to access and use these systems, nor have they received much information or guidance from the home institution. The average distance student would appreciate receiving or purchasing from the home institution a library handbook or other instructional material that would assist them to conduct their library research.

Of those students who have access to a library outreach service from the home institution, the average distance learner is very appreciative of the availability of this service and is generally satisfied with the level of service. Since this average student is working with restricted deadlines for course assignments, the turnaround time to receive materials is of primary concern. Some frustration occurs when the student attempts to request a book or article on a course reading list and learns that the outreach service cannot provide the item at that time. The average distance learner tends to assume that all items listed in course materials should be readily available from the home library.

In conclusion, the findings of the western Canada survey have greatly enhanced the knowledge base on the library use characteristics of distance learners in the non-metropolitan areas of Canada. The findings also indicate that outreach services are currently an effective means to provide library support to distance education programmes. The most striking finding from this study is that the average distance learner is motivated to be involved in the information-gathering process. This finding implies a need for academic librarians to work more closely with local libraries to develop strategies to assist students in the effective use of the resources in those libraries. At the same time, there is a demonstrated need for more informational and instructional material from the home institution to facilitate the process of self-directed learning for the distance learner. In the future when it is possible for the average distance learner to have local access to online library catalogues, bibliographic databases, full-text documents, and other electronic resources, the need for outreach services will be greatly reduced. The role of the outreach librarian will then need to shift to one of instructional librarian to teach the distance students how to navigate these information systems and become truly self-sufficient learners.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Appavoo, P. J., and L. Hansen (1989). "Profile of the distance education library user." In B. M. Lessin (ed.) *Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Charleston, South Carolina*. Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University Press: 13-42.

Burge, E. J., J.E. Snow and J.L. Howard (1988). *Developing partnerships: An investigation of library-based relationships with students and educators participating in distance education in northern Ontario.* Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and Contact North. Summary published under the title "Distance education: Concept and practice." *Canadian Library Journal 46,* (5) 329-335.

Canadian Library Association. Library Services for Distance Learning Interest Group. (1993). *Guidelines for library support of distance learning in Canada.* (CACUL Occasional Paper Series, no.8). Ottawa: Canadian Library Association.

Cleyle, S. E. (1992). "Library bibliographic instruction: a challenge to deliver off-campus." *Journal of Distance Education 7,* (1) 109-113.

Fu, Y. Sin. (1989). "Don't plan around it! Plan for it! A Canadian approach to solving some off-campus library services problems." In B. M. Lessin (ed.) *Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Charleston, South Carolina.* Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University Press: 121-133.

Grosser, K., and G. Bagnell (1989). "External students and public libraries: students perspectives." *Australian Library Journal 38,* (4) 303-317.

75

Latham, S. (1987). "Library services for an educational consortium in the Canadian Rockies." In B. M. Lessin (ed.) *Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Reno, Nevada*. Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University Press: 143-164.

Miller, K. A., J. S. Johnson and M. D. Shorland (1984). *Library use and preferences: a comparison of on-campus and off-campus students at the University of Wyoming.* Laramie: University of Wyoming Libraries. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 256 348).

Orton, L., and J. Wiseman (1977). "Library service to part-time students." *Canadian Library Journal 34,* (1) 23-27.

Parry, A. J. (1994). *"The part-time adult learner: characteristics, needs and barriers to learning: a study of part-time adult learners at the University of Victoria."* Victoria, B.C.: Division of Continuing Studies, University of Victoria.

Slade, A. L. (1994). *Library services to Canadian distance learners: an overview.* Paper presented at the Commonwealth Library Association Workshop on Library Services to Distance Learners, Kingston, Jamaica, August 17-19, 1994.

—— (1991b). "A librarian-centered model for developing and implementing an off-campus library support system: establishing a proactive process." In C. J. Jacob (Comp.) *Fifth Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Albuquerque, New Mexico*. Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University: 255-272.

—— (1991a). "Library support for off-campus and distance education programs in Canada: an overview." *Library Trends 39,* (4) 454-478.

—— (1988). *The second Canadian off-campus library services survey, 1988: Final report.* Victoria, B.C.: University of Victoria. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 305 074).

—— (1987). "Thirteen key ingredients in off-campus library services: a Canadian perspective." In B. M. Lessin (ed.) *Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Reno, Nevada*. Mt. Pleasant: Central Michigan University Press. Reprinted with Addendum In B. M. Lessin (ed.). *Off-campus library services: selected readings from Central Michigan University's off-campus library services conferences*. Metuchen, NJ.: Scarecrow Press, 1991: 161-187.

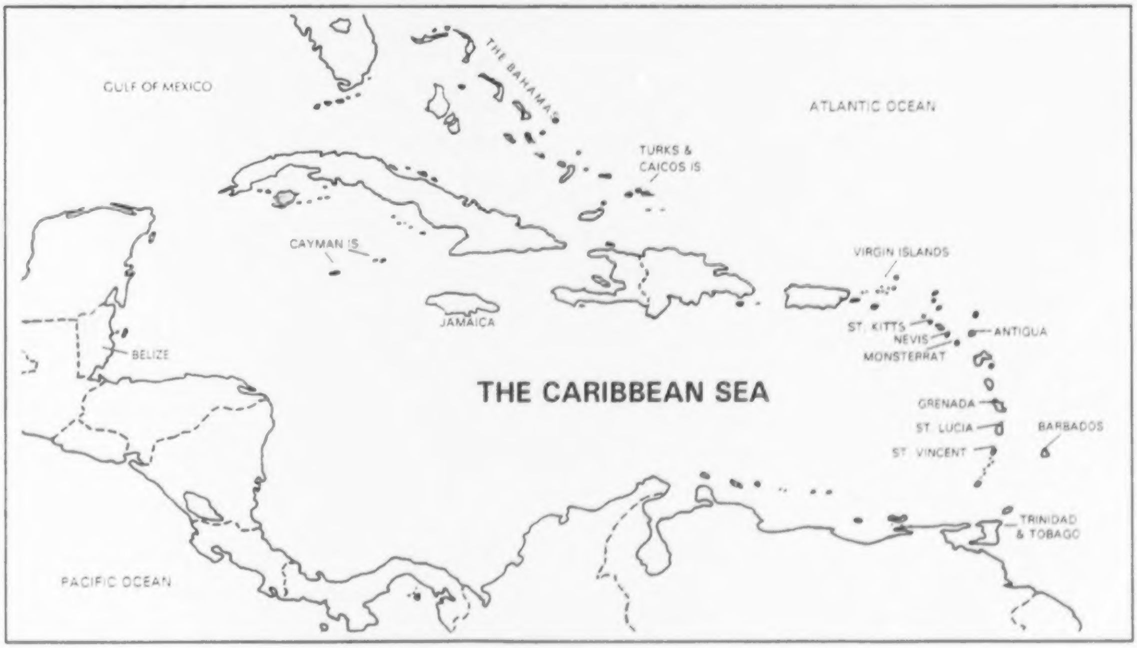
Unwin, L. (1994). "'I'm a real student now': the importance of library access for distance learning students." *Journal of Further and Higher Education 18,*(1) 85-91.

LIBRARY SERVICES FOR
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES DISTANCE STUDENTS

Beverley A. Steele

DISTANCE EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

The University of the West Indies (UWI)[1] was established in 1948 to provide higher education for the citizens of the British West Indian colonies. The UWI has the distinction of being one of only two regional universities in the world.[2] The UWI is supported by the Governments of Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Island, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts/Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Trinidad and Tobago. The three campuses of the university are sited in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, (in Trinidad) and Barbados.[3]



The Caribbean

Map 1: Campus and non-campus countries that support the UWI.

---

[1] The affectionate "calling" name is "U-We".

[2] The other being the University of the South Pacific.

[3] A country which does not have a campus is generally referred to as a non-campus country (NCC).

Twenty-nine years later, in 1977, the first initiative in distance education at the UWI was launched under the banner of a Challenge Examinations Scheme (Challenge). Challenge was operated out of the Extra Mural Centres.[4] The scheme allowed persons resident in a NCC to challenge the UWI system by sitting and passing the first-year examinations for the Bachelor of Social Science degree programmes. They wrote these examinations without obtaining any support from the UWI except for booklets and course outlines.

From its inception however, the original concept of challenge was redefined by those who were involved in it. Student support services were introduced almost immediately, mainly by the Resident Tutors, to enhance the possibility of student success in their examinations. Thus, Resident Tutors have the singular distinction of being the first activists in providing student support services, albeit at an elementary level, for the fledgling distance education programme of the UWI. It is not surprising then, that the Resident Tutors remain important agitators for the formalisation and rationalisation of distance education programmes and services at the UWI. These efforts are increasingly being directed to the improvements of library services for the distance learners.

The establishment of the University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Experiment (UWIDITE)[5] in 1983 signalled the start of a new era in the distance education activities of the UWI. UWIDITE, an interactive teleconferencing system, afforded the delivery of audio-tutorial sessions, supported by printed course materials to the distance learners in the NCCs. UWIDITE has expanded from its original 5 sites to its present strength of 14 sites. Additionally, in the two larger islands – Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago – there are intra-island sites in towns located outside of their capital cities.

Admittedly, distance education at the UWI grew like Topsy[6], as programme direction and planning from the campuses was erratic and intermittent. Nevertheless, UWIDITE has prospered and today, it is an operation embracing six separate programmes. These programmes are at first degree, post-graduate, and professional certificate levels.[7] Student support services however still come from several sources. An examination of these services on a subject-by-subject basis reveals that they are not standardised across the programmes delivered or even for individual subjects within specific programmes. Compounding the issue is the fact that each SCS has its own unique approach to coping with a near zero budget.

---

[4] Following the English tradition the UWI had from its inception an Extramural Department (EMD) in each NCC. Each EMD is under the direction of an academic termed Extramural Tutor (EMT). EMTs are appointed at the level of Lecturer/Senior Lecturer. The principal mandate of the EMD and its centres is to provide developmental and cultural education as well as a UWI presence in the NCCs. In 1990, the EMD was renamed School of Continuing Studies (SCS) in recognition of its expanding role of providing access to university level education in the NCCs. University centre is also another term used to describe the individual SCS. The posts of Extra Mural Tutors were renamed Resident Tutors.

[5] UWIDITE's mission was to test the effectiveness of teleconferencing as an aid to distance education, cross-campus administration and inter-institution communications. UWIDITE's success precipitated changing the "E" to connote Enterprise rather than the original Experiment.

[6] In Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) when asked how old she was Topsy replied "Dunno Missis". Topsy went on to say "never was born ... never had no father nor mother, nor nothin". She didn't know who made her and as she said "spect I grow'd"! (Chapter 20).

[7] First year Law and Social Sciences courses, professional certificates in Public Administration, Business Administration and Education as well as post-graduate programmes in Agriculture and Rural Development (in association with Wye College of the University of London) are offered. In addition, the system is used to deliver many short-term continuing education programmes in several fields such as community health, labour relations, nutrition and librarianship.

Further complicating the picture is that distance education programmes are now being offered outside the SCS and without the ministrations of a Resident Tutor. As these ground stations are outside the influence of the SCS, which is an integral part of the UWI, several peculiar difficulties occur[8]. The students who are attached to these sites relate to a UWIDITE Site Co-ordinator, who oversees the operation of their site on a part-time basis. Thus, these students have no direct contact with the UWI which further aggravates their element of distance.

It is very likely that the UWI's distance education system will not be left in this state of diversity. The university's *Ten Year Development Plan to the Year 2000* (UWI, 1990) states the intention of doubling the enrollment of the university by the year 2000. Thus it is anticipated that a significant number of the additional students will be registered in distance programmes.[9] The prospects are that within the next five years an institutionalised, uniform and disciplined system will emerge from the deliberations of the UWI's distance education planners and the soon to be constituted Board for Non-Campus Countries and Distance Education. However, the new order must of necessity take into account the old, be informed by it and build upon that foundation.

One great advantage that this diversity presents is that the UWI has several different working models and *modi operandi* which it can use to guide its decision making with regard to the future of its distance education programmes. The UWI also has several thousand graduates from the present distance education system, and several hundred continuing education students whose opinion they can and should seek to ensure that the needs of future UWI distance learners will be expertly met. In addition, open meetings with persons in the region who are pursuing distance programmes with extra-regional institutions would provide useful inputs from a source that would be of considerable benefit to the UWI.

The average UWI distance students are a mature, experienced individuals. They are usually in the middle or upper levels of the civil service or the private sector[10]. This is in keeping with the traditional profile of distance students. Persons who have or are pursuing formal programmes via distance, those doing continuing education programmes, the Resident Tutors and the staff of UWIDITE collectively are a reservoir of knowledge that would provide the UWI's distance education planners with practical advice, insight, experience and expertise in many ways and on several issues.

THE PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICES TO SUPPORT OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES: THE BEGINNINGS

When the University Centres were established in the 1960s, provision was made in each Centre for a small library of 10,000 volumes. Library stacks and other furniture were also procured and installed during the establishment phase of the Centres. A post of Library Assistant was established to assist the Resident

---

[8] The Community Colleges in Antigua and St. Lucia offer first-year (taught) courses in Arts and General Studies, Law, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences. The College of the Bahamas and a number of institutions in Jamaica are doing likewise. This development is likely to expand when similar institutions in other countries make the necessary arrangements. Because these programmes are taught full-time by a lecturer endorsed by the UWI, they may be said to be programmes taught "at a distance" or "off-campus:" rather than *de facto* distance education programmes.

[9] Relevant sources are UWI *Overview Development Plan 1990-2000 AD* (1990, pg. 7 para 23); *Time for Action: the report of the West Indian Commission* (1992, pp. 247) and many of the Vice Chancellor's speeches which repeat his commitment to this strategy.

[10] CARICAD (1992, pg.3) provides a profile of Dominican graduates of the Certificate in Public Administration programme.

Tutor in the management of the library services at their Centre. Thus, mistakenly one would assume that library support for challenge would be readily available at the University Centres or at the very most, that the existing facilities would merely require a "topping up" to meet the needs of the challenge students.

The reality is that the growth and development of these libraries were hindered by several factors. The lack of explicit statements in any official documents on the relationship between the Centre libraries and the campus libraries is one factor. Secondly, no guidelines or operational strategies were established for these collections. Consequently, activities such as professional advice and supervision or the training of the Library Assistant on a continuous basis were visibly absent. Therefore, the development of the Centre libraries was a reflection of the interests, attitudes and aptitudes of each Resident Tutor. And finally, the absence of adequate financing for the maintenance, development and growth of the Centre libraries overeached all of the other negative factors that existed.

In Dominica, for example, the emphasis of the library collection during the 1960s and early 1970s was to provide easy reading for the newly literate. In contrast, the focus of the libraries in the Antigua and Grenada Centres was to build collections of West Indiana. Thus, the general state of most of the libraries in the Centres could be described as inadequate, outdated, disorganised, underfinanced and understaffed to meet the information needs of tertiary level distance learners.

By 1978, however, all Resident Tutors saw the necessity of acquiring social science materials to support Challenge. Not only were the distance education students not in a financial position to purchase the required textbooks, but many of the required titles were not usually available in local bookshops. Generally, the inventories at the campus book shops were based on the anticipated demands of students at the campuses and, therefore, the wholesale support of supplying off-campus students could not be accommodated. Additionally, cash flow issues, foreign exchange difficulties and the absence of a realistic estimate for the demand for titles by students in the NCCs were and are some of the limiting factors that concerned the campus book shops.

The necessity to develop library support for challenge students was and is regarded as an exciting opportunity by many of the Resident Tutors. Fergus' review of the Challenge programme in the eastern Caribbean informs us that *in response to Challenge, book collections* [have] *increased in the territories, and in some, libraries are being organised. Books are donated by past university students, and Challenge tends to consume the lion's share of the Extra-Mural vote if, indeed such a vote exists* (Fergus, 1981).

Challenge made it imperative for Resident Tutors to create a resource collection if they wished to assist their students to have the smallest modicum of success in their examinations. Collections to support tertiary level studies in the NCC's were generally lacking. The community colleges had not yet been founded. The public library systems in the islands were not well developed and therefore could not cater to the needs of academia, either in terms of the content and level of the materials they held or in terms of the diversity of information required. The public library systems in the Eastern Caribbean did and do not, generally, exhibit desired standards of general excellence. In 1972, Jordan, in her work on libraries and librarianship in the Caribbean, provided details on the state of the profession and professional practice at that time. She indicated that *financial stringency ... has plagued the smaller islands particularly and made it difficult for governments to match goodwill with hard cash* (Jordan, 1972). Her findings are still applicable to many of the libraries in the Eastern Caribbean. Continuing she states that *book budgets, however, are so low ... that bookstocks are small and in poor condition, especially in the smaller territories* (Jordan, 1972).

This state of affairs is also confirmed by Newton. In her article she quotes the remarks of a British council official who examined public and other library services in the Leeward and Windward Islands[11] during 1975. This official expressed *bitter disappointment to find many of the ... services still languishing in isolation and to walk into libraries where nothing has changed in 15 years, not even some of the bookstock*[s] (Newton, 1977). Looking at the issues that would contribute to the development of these libraries the official went on to state that *it can safely be said that they all need, in varying degrees, additional provisions for the three essentials, books, staff training, buildings and equipment, many of them at* [the] *basic level* (Newton, 1977).

Therefore, while it might be theoretically stated that there were other collections in the islands of the Eastern Caribbean for the Challenge students, it was in reality either the University Centre Libraries or nothing.

In advance of challenge and with the inevitability of distance education becoming an integral part of the UWI, the development of University Centre Libraries was discussed in 1972 by the university. A section of the *Report of the Committee on Library Development* was devoted exclusively to the concept of University Centre Libraries. It acknowledges the existence of the University Centre Libraries and makes six recommendations on the focus and functioning of these libraries. The second states that the University Centre Libraries *ought also to provide an indispensable service in the event of the introduction of a programme of External Studies* (UWI, 1972). The report further recommended that *the Extra Mural Department ... should be required to prepare a budget for these libraries in consultation with the University Library Committee which should advise the Department on all matters of policy and finance relating to these libraries* (UWI, 1972).

This report also proposed that the University Centre Libraries should be serviced by a central library team, based at the Cave Hill Campus in Barbados which should be separate from the Cave Hill Library establishment. This team would be administratively responsible to the librarian-in-charge at Cave Hill. Unfortunately, financial constraints have precluded the execution of these recommendations.

Recent reviews of some of the University Centre Libraries conclude that the university's thrust into distance education is not being matched with a complementary level of library provision. The past and present status of these libraries rests principally on the lack of adequate financing. Jordan's observations of 18 years ago resurface when St. John writes that *it has not been a policy to provide a budget allocation for the libraries of the University Centres and this has hampered the development of resources and therefore the libraries are not as effective as they should be. Bookstocks are in the main outdated and do not adequately support the students' needs ... Periodical literature is very limited and in some cases, almost non-existent. Audio-visual resources do not exist...*(St. John, 1990).

Watson's statement that *without financing there can be no service, and to a large degree the extent of financing predicates the quality of services* is a succinct summation of the issue (Watson, 1992).

The lack of finances for books, staff and other resources has occasioned the Resident Tutors to use whatever ploys, creativity and innovation they could to keep their libraries going. Many of them have been nothing short of valiant in their efforts. The strong recognition that regardless of their deficiencies the University Centre library was the only resource of its kind within easy access for their students fuelled their labours in this regard.

An alternative to building and maintaining University Centre Libraries to support distance learning presented itself in the 1980s. This decade signalled the emergence of national tertiary level institutions in the Eastern Caribbean and The Bahamas. These TLIs, as they were nicknamed, brought under one roof several existing colleges, amalgamating and expanding existing course offerings and providing common student services including library and information services. The UWI began to negotiate linkages with the TLIs, and hoped that some common services could be shared. In the first rush of enthusiasm, University Centre libraries in The Bahamas and St. Lucia were divested, and the bookstock and fixtures handed over to the TLIs. In return, UWI distance education students were allowed access to the libraries at the TLIs.

---

[11] The Leeward Islands are Antigua, Anguilla, St. Kitts/Nevis and Montserrat; the Windward Islands are Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia and Dominica. Some of the islands are in fact a group or chain: e.g., Antigua and Barbadua and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Organization of East Caribbean States (OECS) includes the islands listed above. When Barbados is included the group, it is referred to as the Eastern Caribbean.

Total divestment came to be regretted. In the two territories where divestment occurred, it was soon clear that the needs of the challenge students were not being adequately met by the libraries of the TLIs. Two successive Resident Tutors in St. Lucia and the incumbent university representative in The Bahamas deem it necessary to rebuild a University Centre Library collection to cater exclusively to the needs of the distance students.[12]

The inability of the UWI to contribute to a library service that has an acceptable rate of materials acquisition, appropriate equipment and levels of staffing necessary to support the range of services needed is cited as the singularly significant reason for the failure of the experiment in St. Lucia and Bahamas. The TLIs themselves have limited budgets. Understandably, the TLIs have to satisfy their own legitimate priorities before they could consider other demands. Experience dictates that any future contemplation by the university to provide library services to its distance learners through the pooling of resources must have terms that are carefully negotiated and acceptable to all concerned. Financial provision for materials, services and personnel required to support UWI distance education programmes must be explicitly stated in the terms of agreement and the other party must also give the undertaking that UWI students would receive services at levels commensurate with their needs.

In Dominica, an interesting and very different development took place. The Clifton Dupigny Community College negotiated with the University Centre for the right of access by their students to the library at the University Centre. The community college supplied books, some bookstacks and a Library Assistant. In Grenada, access to the library at the University Centre was allowed to the staff of the Grenada National College. From 1992, when the new library facility was opened a limited number of students from the National College were also given this privilege. These arrangements demonstrate that cooperative agreements between the TLIs and the University Centres are possible within stipulated, understood and agreed upon parameters.

In an attempt to maximise resources, informal liaisons between the University Centre Libraries, the public libraries and the community college libraries within an NCC have always been a feature of the operation of the University Centre Libraries. The UWI *Report of the Committee on Library Development* (1972) recommends such developments. This type of cooperation has been constantly urged by the Hon. Rex Nettleford, OM, Director and Professor, School of Continuing Studies and Pro-Vice Chancellor, Office of Institutional Relations, UWI. The operation of the principle of cooperation has been noticed and reported on by the three librarians who were commissioned at various times to assess the University Centre Libraries and to make recommendations for their development (Bretney, 1978; St. John, 1990; Weitzl, 1990).

The UWI distance students who suffer from the greatest disenfranchisement of library services are those students who are attached to a UWIDITE site that is not a University Centre. Most of these students have no access to any suitable resource material whatsoever, except where the UWIDITE coordinator has shown sufficient interest to attempt to acquire a small stock of relevant books. Some of these students are more fortunate than others, in that they have access to the library of a teacher training college. The scope of these collections is dictated by the needs of the parent institution rather than by UWI programmes. Therefore, these collections would be of limited value to persons pursuing programmes that are of other disciplines.

---

[12] Personal communication with Lady Marilyn Floissac and Mr. Matthew Roberts of St. Lucia and Mr. Matthew William of the Bahamas.

THE PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICES – THE CLIENT'S VIEW

Prior to 1994, the evaluation and review of library services in the region, particularly at the tertiary level, have been the purview of professional librarians and educators. In 1994, this author conducted a survey to elicit the opinions of distance students with regard to library services to support their learning. The survey provided insights to the issue from a perspective that hitherto has been undocumented.

Consumers of a service provide authoritative views on the quality of a service. Hence, UWI distance learners are legitimate sources on the quality of library services that are available to them. Opinions on many facets of the services were sought including how the students view the status of the library service they received and what their views were on improvements and innovations for enhanced services.

The opinions of distance students in four NCC sites were sought via a self-administered questionnaire during June and July, 1994 (Steele, 1994). Respondents were located in one Windward Island (Grenada), one Leeward Island (Antigua), the British Virgin Islands (BVI) and Tobago. Antigua and Grenada have University Centre Libraries. Tobago has neither a University Centre nor a TLI. Whilst BVI students have access to a community college library. One of the strengths of the survey is that it covered the range of options deployed to provide library services to the distance learners of the UWI.

The main anxiety of the students was access to relevant and current literature. Students also expected the library to provide a quiet place for study and course work preparation. Most of the distance learners were married and had children. Consequently, many of them were in domestic situations that were not conducive to studying. The Antiguan and Grenadian University Centre Libraries, the H. Lavity Stout Community College in the BVI and the public library in Tobago provided a place where students could concentrate on academic work away from domestic pressures and distractions. Students spent about three hours a week in a library using library materials and three hours per week studying or preparing course work without using the library's materials at all. Many students stated that they would use the library more often if it were opened for longer hours.

It was almost the unanimous view (91.4%) of the students that library support was an important factor in the success of their studies. Moreover, 95% of the students assumed that arrangements would be in place for them to access a library that was adequately resourced to meet the needs of the programme they were doing. This expectation was cited in terms of having access to at least the books and reference material recommended as course reading.

When asked to rank twelve various types of library services in order of importance to them, the five cited most frequently were:

- increased bookstock;
- multiple copies of main texts;
- a collection of tapes of course lectures delivered on UWIDITE;
- photocopies of out-of-print materials; and
- longer library opening hours.

Students from the territories which had University Centre Libraries were unanimous in the view that library support should continue to come through the University Centre. Of the BVI students surveyed, 80% indicated that they would have preferred to receive their library support through the University Centre rather than from the community college. In Tobago, which had no University Centre, most of the students (60%) would prefer their library support services to be delivered through the public library system rather then through a community college library.

Providing books, library space and other library amenities is expensive. Inadequate funding is perceived to be the principal obstacle to the growth of the University Centre Libraries. Ways and means of alternatives to expensive bookstock and generating income were explored in the survey. The use of photocopies to increase access was given high priority. This however raises the issue of copyright. Compounding this issue is that the UWI programmes are not restricted to a single jurisdiction. Cross-jurisdiction issues pertaining to copyright and related matters would have to be resolved. The preparation and production of readers of supplementary course material are a part of this consideration. Problems are meant to be solved, however, and one of the most appropriate ways of extending library services to the distance learners is the legitimate use of previously published materials in readers.

The task is less formidable than it at first appears, as much of the relevant source materials on the Caribbean and for UWI courses is the work of staff and graduates of the UWI, or have appeared in UWI journals and publications.

The diversification of the materials collected was also explored. Students placed a high priority on a "collection" of taped lectures. The majority (61.1%) also said they would have "no problem at all" in using computer-based technology and microfilm as a means of accessing suitable literature and relevant information. The students in Tobago were less enthusiastic than the others in accessing library services through the use of modern technology. They felt that they lacked the knowledge and competence to use technology-driven information sources.

In the examination of the problem of funding the expansion of library services to meet the needs of the distance learner, students indicated that they would be prepared to contribute (EC)$100[13] annually (91.3%). Less than half of the students were prepared to pay increased course fees to the university itself if this meant a significantly improved library. Their preference was to put their money directly into the coffers of the Centre Library. The majority also felt that their governments might be prepared to fund the University Centre Library in their respective territories.

Students prize their access to university-level education through distance learning to the extent that only six respondents would discontinue their present programmes if library support was not improved. However, they realised that they were at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the on-campus students and off-campus students who can access campus libraries without too much difficulty.

Close scrutiny of the responses on a territorial basis indicates the serious plight of students who do not have access to a University Centre Library or a library which caters to university-level programmes. In Tobago, 100% of the respondents rated the present library support as either non-existent or poor. In the other sites surveyed 36.9% of the respondents thought that the present library services available to distance learners were non-existent or poor, 36.3% thought the existing services were fairly good and 26.8% felt that they were good or excellent.

It is incumbent upon those appointed to rationalise, expand and administer the UWI's distance education programme to recognise that library development is an essential component of a successful distance education programme. Quality library and information services can no longer occupy the optional frills position but rather they must be seen as a basic requirement and an infrastructural necessity. The unrelenting efforts of the Resident Tutors and those who have consistently helped the Centre libraries to obtain bookstock and training opportunities for the library assistants have created the nucleus of a library network in most of the NCCs. The responsibility now rests with the UWI to use this base and to expand upon it to provide a library service that meets the needs of its distance students.

The experiences of experiments in alternative approaches to provide library support to distance students should not go unnoticed. The UWI also has at its disposal the goodwill generated by the positive relationships that exist between the Resident Tutors, the public libraries and the TLI libraries. Every effort should be made to sustain this goodwill for the continued support of the UWI Centre Libraries.

---

[13] The Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC$) is the currency of the member countries of the O.E.C.S. US$1 = EC$2.67.

In 1985, acting on a personal idea which recommended itself as aiding library development, the Resident Tutor in Grenada was instrumental in the formation of the Grenada Library Association (GLA). Reporting on the development of special libraries in the Eastern Caribbean, Brathwaite (1977) endorses the role of library associations in reporting that *the Resident Tutor in Grenada made a very pertinent comment, and one which I would like to pass on for your further attention. I believe* [that] *she was referring to Grenada, but except for Barbados in the area under survey, the comment is valid as far as I know, for the seven territories. In her opinion, there is need for library associations. She felt that an association would stimulate interest and give encouragement to the development of library services. I should like to endorse this comment, especially in the light of the number of qualified librarians now completing training from the UWI Library School at Mona* (Brathwaite, 1977).

The GLA is still functioning.[14] The current President of the GLA is Mrs. Wilma Sampson, Administrative Assistant at the University Centre, Grenada and the person in charge of the University Centre Library. Members of this association include librarians and senior staff of the public library, the National Documentation Centre and the UWI Centre Library. The formation of similar associations in the other NCCs may indeed occasion closer cooperation to the mutual benefit of all involved. One of the concrete results of the cooperation fostered by the GLA is the institution and maintenance of a union catalogue by the Association in the Sheila Buckmire Library, formerly the Grenada Public Library. Confident of support within the NCC community, the UWI must now address the necessity of providing library support for its distance education students in a manner controlled by the UWI and designed to meet the needs of its own students.

LIBRARIES FOR DISTANCE LEARNERS – AN IMPERATIVE

The idea that library support for distance learners is essential abounds in the literature. Without an extensive or exhaustive search the following have been uncovered:

As the UWI plans its new development programme in distance education, library support for this will be critical (Grell, 1992).

It is the responsibility of all institutions offering external studies to provide at least a base level of library service to their students commensurate with the library related needs of these courses (Watson, 1992).

The nature of Extra Mural studies, and that of the Challenge Programme in particular, put heavy reliance on self-study and thus requires the provision of first-class library facilities (Wietzl, 1990).

Library support is an integral part of quality education and a vital service that should be available to all students, whether on-campus or off-campus (Kascus and Aguilar quoted in Watson, 1992).

The opinions of all of these writers clearly support the position that quality library and information services are an important element of any distance education programme of worth. The concept of library services to distance learners is not free of issues. Finance, staff, resources, range and depth of services are some of the thorny matters. Within the context of the Caribbean not only does the region have to confront the problems that distance education in developed countries face but also there are a number of issues that are caused by their Third World status. Added to these are others that are uniquely Caribbean which need to be included in the deliberation process. These include small island states with the concomitant factors such as cultural differences, social patterns, foreign exchange regulations *inter alia*.

To be settled is the role of the University Centre Libraries. The new dispensation which redefines the UWI's development of distance education and its renewed thrust to the NCCs must be finally and unequivocally stated. One school of thought is that these units should be viewed as a national resource centre catering to a clientele wider than its distance learners. Without doubt the role of these units in the 1990s and beyond has digressed considerably from their initial undertaking.

---

[14] The continuing contribution of and the commitment to library services for Grenada by the Resident Tutor for Grenada must not be underrated. *Editor's note.*

Several suggestions have been made on the role of the University Centre Libraries in the new administrative arrangements. These include whether they should be a national resource centre catering to the information needs of any national who has a genuine need to use its resources. In the spirit of co-operation and the intent to maximise resources, care should be taken not to duplicate the collections of the other (local) libraries. Another point of view is that the University Centre Library should also function as a UWI Resource Centre collecting and storing materials that are specific to that territory. Also opined is that they should provide a selection of books up to first-year university standard in the most frequently studied areas so that residents on their island who may at some time become UWI students will be able to read, at their leisure, titles of significance in the particular discipline.

Grell (1993) recommends that the University Centre Libraries in the Eastern Caribbean should provide library support for adult education programmes and continuing education programmes for professionals. Further he postulates that the University Centre Library should function as a career guidance centre. In addition to providing regional information at a general level, Grell saw as a future function the provision of support for postgraduate research in each territory. Moreover, he explores the notion that the University Centre Libraries should be centres at which documentation relating to each specific territory could readily be available for use by undergraduate and postgraduate students, consultants and others who are researching issues that are territorial specific.

In my view, the University Centre should be both a part of the UWI Library system and a national resource, each linked into the library system of their territory. University Centre Libraries should be regarded as part of the contribution that the University of the West Indies makes to the academic life of its non-campus countries.

The stage is now set for a new chapter in the annals of library services from and within the UWI system. The formalisation of appropriate, adequate and all-encompassing services for distance learners at the UWI will be of landmark significance. This step will ultimately lead to the enhancement of library services across the entire Caribbean and most specifically to UWI distance students.

One day, maybe, this will come to pass. For now *one, one fill basket.*[15]

---

[15] A West Indian adage which means that if one cannot have everything at the same time, then a bit-by-bit approach will accomplish the task or "fill the basket."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brathwaite, Joan A. (1977). *Special libraries in the Development Sciences in the Smaller Islands in the English-speaking Caribbean*. Report commissioned by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) and presented at an ISER Seminar.

Bretney, Nel (1978). *Report on a visit to seven University Centre Libraries*. Barbados: The University of the West Indies.

Caribbean Centre for Administration Development (CARICAD) (1992). *A survey of graduates of the Certificate in Public Administration in Dominica (CPA) 1984 - 1991*. CARICAD in collaboration with the Establishment Personnel and Training Division (EPTD). Bridgetown: CARICAD.

Fergus, Howard (1981). "Challenge examinations in the Lesser Developed Countries of the English-speaking Caribbean – a review." *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs 7*, (4) 8-14.

Grell, Gerald A.C. (1993). *The University of the West Indies and the Eastern Caribbean Islands*. Barbados: Office of University Services (EC), The University of the West Indies.

Jordan, Alma (1972). "Libraries and librarianship in the Commonwealth Caribbean." *Caribbean Quarterly 18*,(4) 43-50.

Newton, Velma (1977). "The role of libraries in developing countries: focus on libraries in Barbados and Jamaica." *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs 2*, (12) 1-7.

Sherlock, Philip and Rex Nettleford (1990). *The University of the West Indies – a Caribbean response to the challenge of change*. London: MacMillan Caribbean.

St. John, Nancy (1990). *Evaluation report of the School of Continuing Studies Library Development Project in Non-Campus Countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States*. Barbados: Office of University Services (EC), The University of the West Indies.

Steele, Beverley A. (1994). *Library services in distance learning – the client's view*. Paper presented at the Commonwealth Library Association Workshop on Library Services to Distance Learners. Kingston, Jamaica.

—— (1993). "The University's unique constituency: the Non-Campus Countries." *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs 18*, (4) 32-50.

The University of the West Indies (1992). *Overview Development Plan 1990 - 2000 A.D.* Jamaica: The University of the West Indies.

—— (1972). *Report of the Library Development Committee*. Mona: UWI.

Watson, Elizabeth F. (1992). *Library services to distance learners: a report.* Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

Weitzl, Ruth (1990). *Final report on The University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies Libraries Improvement Project.* Barbados: Office of University Services, The University of the West Indies.

(The) West Indian Commission (1992). *Time for action: report of the West Indian Commission.* Barbados: The West Indian Commission.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA'S LIBRARY SERVICES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS

S. J. Behrens and L.M. Grobler

INTRODUCTION

The University of South Africa (generally known by its acronym Unisa) provided tuition to over 130,000 students in 1994. This student body represents 38% of South Africa's total university enrollment. The majority of Unisa's students reside in South Africa, with approximately 3,400 students throughout the rest of the African continent. There are also about 1,200 students in Canada, the United States of America, South America, Asia, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Unisa caters for students unable to attend a residential university and those who prefer to study independently. Admission to studies is granted to all who qualify, and fees are considerably lower than at residential universities. Examinations are written in 450 centres worldwide, with most centres being in South Africa.

Unisa's main campus is in Pretoria and is supported by a study centre in Johannesburg and regional offices in Cape Town, Durban and Pietersburg. The university has six faculties (Arts, Economic and Management Sciences, Law, Education, Theology, and Science) and 59 teaching departments. These departments provide tuition for first, second and professional Bachelor degrees, undergraduate and postgraduate diplomas, honours, master's and doctoral programmes. In 1994, Unisa's total staff complement of 3,360 included 1,395 lecturers and researchers, and 282 personnel in the Department of Library Services.

There are several major supportive administrative departments at Unisa, three of which are the Department of Library Services, the Production Department, and the Dispatch Department. To give an idea of the extent of production and dispatch support needed for the large student body: the Production Department, which publishes the study guides and tutorial letters, printed 271 million pages of study material during 1993, and in the same year the Dispatch Department (which sends, *inter alia*, the study material to students), posted about eight million items. Unisa has its own post office on the main campus to handle the incoming and outgoing mail which includes study material, library material, letters and students' assignments. Over one-and-a-quarter million assignments alone are received, marked by lecturers and sent back to students each year.

One of the unique features of South Africa as a country is that First World and Third World characteristics co-exist. Excellent hi-tech university and college libraries contrast starkly with public and school libraries that are unable to meet the needs of library patrons at this level.

THE UNISA LIBRARY

Unisa's library is the largest academic library in South Africa. The library's holdings of over 1,337,000 books and 184,000 bound periodical volumes are supplemented by documents on microfilm and microfiche, maps, video cassettes, CD-ROMs and audio recordings on records, cassettes and CDs. The holdings are available to all Unisa students and staff and to outside researchers by arrangement. During 1993, the library handled over 838,000 book loans and provided over 137,500 photocopies from periodicals. Apart from the main library on the Pretoria campus, there are branch libraries at the regional offices as well as limited book collections housed in the Johannesburg Study Centre and the East London Municipal Library. Students access these collections either through a personal visit to one of the Unisa libraries or have the

Unisa Main Campus, Pretoria

Photo 1: Unisa Library (marked by arrow)

library material posted to them. Although a large percentage of loans to students are made over the counter, students can also forward requests by post, fax, telex, by means of videotext (through the local BELTEL[1] system) or by leaving a message on voice mail.

The use of the latest information technology is the order of the day in this library. The entire collection is accessed through an OPAC system. Terminals are located in the main library, branch libraries, and throughout the main campus buildings (for example in the various teaching departments). This is supported by a Local Area Network of over 40 subject databases on CD-ROM, and online access to various bibliographic services such as the local SABINET (South African Bibliographic and Information Network) and Dialog.

Through its various departments and branch libraries, the Unisa library is geared to render a service to cater for the diverse demands and circumstances of its student users. The Study Collection is the undergraduate student's first introduction to Unisa's library services. The main Study Collection is housed in the library in Pretoria, with smaller Study Collections in the branch libraries. The Study Collection stocks multiple copies of recommended books for undergraduate courses as well as for most postgraduate courses at honours level. These books are available for loan to students for the writing of assignments and further self-study. Limited stocks of prescribed books are also kept in the Study Collection. However, students are expected to purchase their own copies of prescribed books and no reservations are made for prescribed books already out on loan, as is the case with recommended books. Shillinglaw (1988) and Willemse (1986; 1991) provide detailed accounts of the Study Collection at Unisa.

One of the advantages of having the books required by undergraduate students in a separate collection from the rest of the research collection is the relative ease of access. The books in the Study Collection are not arranged according to the Dewey Decimal Classification system (as is the case with the research collection), but instead are shelved alphabetically under the author's surname. In the majority of cases, the student does not need to consult the OPAC in order to locate the book on the shelf. In the case of postal requests, library staff are able to locate the item rapidly and dispatch the material to the student with the minimum delay. In spite of this facility of easy access, Shillinglaw (1988) refers to studies of user failure to locate items in the Study Collection. The recommendations of these studies will inform and attempt to improve the service and future developments of the Study Collection.

---

[1] BELTEL is a videotext service which facilitates communication between staff and students of Unisa, including for information transfer purposes. Access to BELTEL can be made at home, if the student has the appropriate hardware and software or by going to one of the Unisa library centres where BELTEL facilities exist.

UNISA STUDENT PROFILES

Unisa is a university of adult, independent learners. About 65% of the students are enrolled for a first Bachelors degree (for example Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science). The student body is very heterogeneous. Most students are in full-time employment in a wide variety of professions and are studying to upgrade their qualifications. The average age of a Unisa student is 31, ranging from 17 to 84 years old. Male and female students are represented in equal proportions. Students choose between English and Afrikaans as their language medium of tuition; however, over 40% of the students have an African language as their mother tongue.

Undergraduates

Undergraduates are products of a school system. The South African school system is plagued with many difficulties and deficiencies. Consequently, a high percentage of Unisa undergraduate students are underprepared for tertiary studies. The deficiencies of the South African school system are manifested in many ways. For example, students from poor educational backgrounds often have little or no exposure to library services of any type before beginning their university studies. On the other hand students with a stronger educational background are adept at integrating libraries and information services into their study programme.

Many Unisa students therefore are unprepared and/or unable to use a library competently. Basic skills such as experience in alphabetisation and familiarity with the concept of catalogues and the use of other bibliographic tools are not widely held (Shillinglaw, 1988). Compounding these problems even further is that the libraries and the practice of librarianship are alien to a large majority of students. Thus, such students register at Unisa lacking knowledge of how to use libraries and without a full understanding of the role of the library in the learning process.

The increasing use of information technology in South African academic libraries has serious implications for the underprepared and educationally disadvantaged student. Dalton (1989) cautions against the creation of an "electronic elite" in the information field, and Suttie (1990) points out that university libraries run the risk of becoming inaccessible to the technologically uninitiated. Suttie further notes that librarianship is inherently the product of Western education and has been shaped by a strong bibliophilic perspective (Suttie, 1990).

Postgraduates

Over 19,000 students at Unisa are studying at postgraduate level. Postgraduate students are from culturally diverse groups. In addition, many will have experienced different undergraduate teaching methods, having graduated from another university. There are also students at the postgraduate level who, while able to use a traditional library, may not possess the skills required for dealing with technologically sophisticated bibliographic tools. Consequently, it cannot be assumed that all postgraduate students will have well-developed information-literacy and bibliographic skills.

At most residential universities in South Africa, it is usual for students to continue with postgraduate studies with little or no interruption between undergraduate and advanced study. This is not the case with the majority of postgraduate students enrolling at Unisa. Many Unisa students resume university studies after having been academically inactive for years. The majority of postgraduate students, especially those studying economic and management sciences, are in full-time employment and many are in senior or managerial positions. As postgraduate students tend to be older, factors such as family, work and community commitments may also be more demanding.

THE NEED FOR STUDY SPACE

Apart from the problems inherent in the school system in South Africa, other political and economic legacies have resulted in unemployment, inadequate housing and broken family life. Many students, through unemployment or preference, are now studying on a full-time basis through Unisa, and as a result have the time to use the library in person. As a result, although Unisa is primarily a distance learning university, it has many students who use its libraries in much the same way as they would as students of a residential university. The greatest proportion of students live in the Pretoria-Johannesburg area. Some students live close enough to use the main library in Pretoria or the facilities provided by the Study Centre in Johannesburg on a regular basis. In addition, students use the Unisa branch libraries and public libraries throughout the country which, to a limited extent, are able to meet the needs of students, including Unisa students.

Many Unisa students travel daily to the university's campuses (and public libraries throughout the country), simply in search of suitable study facilities which they might not have at home – a desk and chair, electric light and quiet surroundings. Since Unisa's campuses were not originally designed for residential study, the need for additional student space has had to be addressed with some urgency. The main library had to take the need for additional study space into consideration when the new library building (occupied in 1987) was designed. Although large study areas are now available in the Unisa libraries, the Pretoria campus has recently also expanded into buildings in a neighbouring suburb, where a large-scale study space is being planned.

The diversity among the student body at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level provides a tremendous challenge to Unisa's tuition. This also applies to its library's provision of services. It is against this background, and the method of tuition provided by Unisa, that the library must devise means to make its service accessible to its total student population.

METHOD OF TUITION

For Unisa undergraduate and honours courses, tuition is provided mainly through the printed medium in the form of internally published study guides and tutorial letters (both written by the lecturers), and commercially available prescribed books which students purchase themselves. The main study package is supplemented by other media and methods such as library books and periodical articles, audio cassettes, slides, videos, videoconferences, computer-assisted learning, multimedia packages, telephone conferences, radio broadcasts on a special "Radio Unisa" channel and discussion classes. Discussion classes are subject specific and are held periodically during the academic year in various main centres in South Africa. At these discussion classes, lecturers and students meet to explore various aspects of a course. Attendance at most of these discussion classes is optional.

The dependence of Unisa on the printed word as the primary mode of teaching is predicated by the constraints that affect the educational goals of the average Unisa student. Print-based programmes supported by correspondence with the student are particularly appropriate for students who live in rural areas or who come from disadvantaged (especially those that are technologically deficient) backgrounds. Students may also contact lecturers on the telephone, by letter, or visit them on the Pretoria campus where all lecturers have offices.

The study package

On registration, all undergraduate and most honours students receive an initial package of compulsory study material. This package includes study guides which outline the course content, provide guidance and other pertinent information. The study guide is used in close conjunction with the prescribed reading material. The study guide does not reproduce or replace prescribed reading material, but is often used by lecturers to supplement textbooks. The primary function of the study guide is to lead the student through the prescribed syllabus, and it takes the place of formal lectures.

The study package also contains tutorial letters through which lecturers communicate with students on a more personal level. The first tutorial letter of the academic year contains the course content and work programme. It includes topics for written assignments and a reading list. Subsequent tutorial letters provide academic direction and feedback on assignments which have been marked and returned to the student. This interactive educational process between lecturer and student can be termed *guided self study* (Shillinglaw, 1988).

All degree and diploma programmes are based on students working independently through the study material and submitting written or practical assignments which are assessed by the lecturers. Admission to examinations is based on credits obtained from satisfactory assignments. In addition some Masters degrees have a course work component and all Masters and Doctoral students are required to submit a dissertation.

To augment the study guides and tutorial letters, lecturers provide reading lists of recommended and additional reading material for the students. Distance students generally live far away from libraries of any size and often are resident in rural areas which lack many of the basic amenities including electricity. Further, as Willemse (1991) points out, public libraries in South Africa are not sufficiently well stocked with suitable academic material, nor are they sufficient in number or size to provide more than a supplementary service to distance learning students. Unisa's library, therefore, is the primary source of supplementary materials for students. Unisa's library services and its collection have thus expanded substantially over the years to accommodate these needs, with special attention paid to ensuring that students have easy access to the information they may need to supplement their basic study package.

LIBRARY SERVICES TO UNDERGRADUATE AND HONOURS STUDENTS

As mentioned, the main undergraduate and honours study package (i.e., the study guides, tutorial letters and prescribed books) can be supplemented by other reading matter which is identified by lecturers and provided by the library. These supplementary items (usually books and periodical articles) are selected by the lecturers and listed in the main tutorial letter for a course. The readings suggested in these tutorial letters form an integral part of the library's acquisition process. The supplementary items are categorised as *recommended* reading matter or *additional* reading matter. For each level of study, the number of titles that can be housed is predetermined. For example, a first-year course is limited to 10 items, a second-year course 20 items, a third-year course 30 items, and an honours course 50 items. The Study Collection contains all of the titles on the reading list. The additional reading matter is provided from the main research collection where available, but students are not guaranteed availability of these items.

Student requests for recommended reading lists are filled by the library. The Unisa libraries operate as conventional libraries for those who personally use the facilities; for students who rely on the postal and telecommunications services the library acts as a document supply facility. Shillinglaw (1992) observes that the provision of reading lists is no guarantee that the books listed will be requested by students and on the other hand the library cannot guarantee that particular books will be available when they are needed. These types of problems have caused the library to constantly re-evaluate how to best provide an information service to students.

Multiple copies of recommended items are acquired for the Study Collection to ensure that as many students as possible have access to this category of reading material during the academic year. Based on student enrollment, the number of copies purchased of a recommended title can be enormous (sometimes over 1,000). As student numbers have increased, several problems have been encountered in the provision of multiple copies of books, the major one naturally being the limited budget of the library. Additional problems include the level of usage of a recommended book, and that for some books only a small percentage of their contents are of relevance for that particular course. To effect savings without affecting the mandate of the Study Collection this problem was addressed in a unique way. Books of readings, consisting of periodical articles (or sections from books) are prepared by the library. Copyright permission for reproduction (with royalty agreements) is obtained from publishers and the relevant items for a particular course are bound together in one volume. This volume is then used in the normal fashion as a recommended book for that course. (Problems associated with the lecturers' listing and the library's acquisition procedures are discussed by Willemse (1991).)

The multiple copy purchase policy on a student or per title ratio can lead to enormous holdings of single titles. Apart from the financial implications of this policy, storage space is also a concern. In an effort to counteract these problems without affecting the quality of the programme, some subject courses with large enrollments, on an experimental basis, are replacing their possible ten recommended titles with a book of readings (produced by agreement with the copyright holders of the items concerned). The intention is to issue the book of readings to a student for an academic year, after which it is returned and re-issued to another student in the following year on the same basis. This has the advantage of students having relevant, carefully selected supplementary information available throughout the year. Further, purchase and postage costs are reduced. However, on a regular basis the content of these readers will have to be reviewed and updated as necessary.

The disadvantages are that students have less contact with the library, hence they do not develop life-serving information-gathering skills which are noticeably lacking in underprepared students. For students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds and library systems that are poorly resourced, the pre-packaging of supplementary information retards the development of information-gathering skills. Students with underdeveloped information skills become dependent on others to satisfy their information needs and usually retain this dependency trait.

Because of the pre-packaging of supplementary readings the arrangement of the Study Collection by author and the ability to get materials without going to the library, students do not require advanced library skills. Of greater concern however, is that, in practice the Unisa librarians have found that the lecturers' expectations of independent library use by undergraduate students are unrealistic. There are many reasons for the incongruence between lecturer expectation and student use of the library. For example, the use of the postal system as a means of accessing information means that students' inability to use a library does not translate into access. This is because any student who requests information from the library is sent the relevant materials. To become an active library patron depends on the student making the necessary effort. Students in full-time employment, or students living in remote rural areas, tend to use the library as a last resort rather than an essential component of their study programme because of time and geographical constraints. Furthermore, the expense involved in returning borrowed books discourages many students from reading beyond the basic minimum required for examination success (Shillinglaw, 1992).

For equality of opportunity it is essential that all students pursuing a particular course at the same time have timely access to the same or similar recommended reading. As a practitioner, Shillinglaw (1988) has observed that if a required item is not available at the time of need the student experiences a learning problem. Even though there may be perfectly acceptable alternative titles available, experience has shown that most students will reject a substitution unless the lecturer has specifically indicated its acceptability. The librarian has neither the specialised subject knowledge nor the authority to recommend specific substitutions. However, as professionals, based on training and experience librarians may draw students' attention to other books on the subject matter. This brings sharply into focus the need for an active library/lecturer interface in distance programmes. Students' access to titles is time-sensitive based on the due dates of assignments or the learning sequence of the particular section of a course. Forward planning is thus essential – both for the student and the library.

LIBRARY SERVICES FOR MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS

Master's and doctoral students are very dependent on the library for independent research and study. However, most Unisa postgraduate students have limited personal access to the research collection housed in the main library. Those students who are within commuting distance of the Pretoria campus are mostly in full-time employment, allowing for personal visits only during limited periods such as vacations or after normal working hours.

The premise that the postgraduate student will visit the library for independent study and research cannot be taken for granted by Unisa's library. The circumstances in which these students function had to be taken into consideration when devising the service to cater for their needs. The Unisa library accepts that the needs of postgraduate students are very individualistic and also largely unpredictable. To this end, the library has a subject reference staff of 19 subject librarians and 14 junior subject librarians to meet the information needs of postgraduate students. The subject librarians are organised as far as possible into groups corresponding to the six faculties of the University.

The basic functions of the subject librarians include liaison with the teaching departments (often regarding the student's research); selection of suitable research material; collection development; compilation of bibliographies on selected topics on request or in anticipation of future needs; user education; literature searching and/or assistance with literature searching as well as specialised reference services and, where necessary, cooperation with other libraries on behalf of students. (The services provided by Unisa's subject librarians are described by Poller *et al.* (1988) and Colenbrander (1984).)

When a student registers for postgraduate studies at Unisa, the subject librarian writes to the student, outlining the services available. The subject librarian also opens a file on the student which documents and records all student/library contacts. In many cases, the subject librarian may already have had contact with the student prior to registration as prospective students are often introduced to the library by a lecturer. At this initial meeting the subject librarian will render basic assistance such as an explanation of the layout of the library, how to locate material and the provision of a preliminary reading list. The prospective student is then in a better position to do preliminary reading and research before finally submitting a research proposal.

The compilation and issuing of bibliographies is an important function of the subject librarian. The bibliographies serve to give an overview of a particular subject. Most of the items listed are available from the library, and the shelf numbers are given for convenience. The compilation of bibliographies also provides a means of ascertaining collection strength and remedying gaps in the collection. Useful items which are not in the library's stock are ordered.

Basic bibliographies on general topics, such as research methodology and questionnaire design, are prepared in advance and issued to students as and when required. These standard bibliographies are updated regularly. The main advantage of this service is that subject librarians are in a position to provide the student with a list which can serve as a starting point. This is then followed by more specific bibliographies on the particular focus of the student's project. If necessary, literature searches tailored specifically for the student's research topic are done on national and international databases.

A typical subject-specific bibliography for a postgraduate student will be compiled from the OPAC, SABINET databases, subject-relevant CD-ROMs, and various other bibliographies such as *ISAP* (Index to South African Periodicals), the *Union catalogue of theses and dissertations of South African universities*, and UMI's *Dissertation abstracts*. References to South African press cuttings are sometimes also included, and these searches are done via the University of the Orange Free State's INCH (Institute for Contemporary History) database. Should a topic not be adequately covered by these databases, the subject librarian will select a suitable database on Dialog and access this for the student. The bibliography is sent to the student, together with an explanation on how to obtain the material from the library. Where specifically requested, references can be downloaded onto diskettes and sent to the student in this format. Refinements to this service are currently under review.

The subject librarians also keep the student up to date by the provision of copies of articles which they may encounter in the course of their browsing through the current literature. Items not held by the Unisa library are requested for the student via the interlending system. Postgraduate students visiting the library personally are shown how to use the OPAC and are assisted in end-user searching on the various CD-ROM databases.

USER EDUCATION

A general information service and basic training in the use of the OPAC are available for all students using the library personally. The section that houses the general information desk also renders assistance in the use of ready-reference works. The more complex enquiries of postgraduate students are referred to the subject librarian responsible for the specific academic discipline.

Formal user education programmes (the teaching of library skills) were introduced for students in 1986. It had previously been felt that library skills were not essential for Unisa students since items were either sent to them via the postal system or, if they personally visited the library, they could easily locate their recommended books in the Study Collection (Williams, 1986). The increasing need to provide user education for students emerged in the early 1980s when there was an unprecedented growth in the number of underprepared students. At the same time, the number of Unisa students visiting the Unisa library – and other public and university libraries throughout the country – increased. The lack of a library ethos in these students became apparent when they attempted to use Unisa's and other libraries (Willemse, 1991). In 1984, the Unisa library began an internal investigation into the need for user education for students. The report of this investigation confirmed the lack of library skills in both undergraduate and postgraduate Unisa students, and proposed the introduction of user education programmes.

The first user education programmes consisted of library orientation lectures (offered either in the main library or at discussion classes), library orientation workbooks, and guides to the library. Students' attendance at programmes and the use of these publications was voluntary. Evaluation of these methods during 1987 indicated that the library should develop a series of library skills workbooks as a means of improving the students' proficiency to use a library. For various reasons, this recommendation could not be activated immediately. Thus tape-slide programmes presented at discussion classes continued to be the principal method of user education for some time. In 1989, another proposal for the development of library skills workbooks was submitted by the library. This proposal was accepted by the necessary administrative and faculty sections of the university and put into practice in 1991. In the same year, the library started presenting library skills lectures which were broadcast on the "Radio Unisa" channel. Today the workbooks (and an annual radio broadcast) are the main method of providing user education. All students receive library skills workbooks with their basic study package. The library skills curriculum is spread over three levels of study: upon registration at first-year level; at second-year level; and at the commencement of an honours degree. The completion of the workbooks is not mandatory for students, and no credit is given for successful completion of these assignments.

In 1994, the library started a new user education programme on a trial basis with about 300 students who study on the Pretoria campus. Topics covered in the talk-and-chalk lectures and practicals (spread over five lectures in five days) included library anxiety, orientation to the library and its collections, use of the Study Collection, completing issue cards, using the OPAC an explanation of the subject headings and an introduction to reference books. A feature of this trial programme was the use of peer instruction by students who had been trained to assist in the running of the programme. The evaluation of this scheme should provide some useful information on its effectiveness and approach.

Investigations into the library skills of distance learning students have shown that the attitude of lecturers plays an important role in students mastering these skills (Behrens, 1993). Teaching library skills is unlikely to be successful unless the faculty lecturers have a positive attitude towards the need for their students to use the library as an integral part of their subject course work.

CONCLUSION

Unisa envisages its future role as that of an institution where the distance between students and the University is diminished as far as possible. This distance is not necessarily only geographic, but could also be seen as the gap between the preparedness of first-year university students and their ability on graduation to cope in an information-permeated world. Located in a country whose population has both First World and Third World cultures provides Unisa with many challenges. The marked disparities in the socio-economic circumstances of persons admitted to Unisa create a body of students that is not homogeneous. Whilst students who come from educationally enriched backgrounds encounter few obstacles to impede their study plan, students from backgrounds that are not as prosperous do. Factors such as access to an infrastructure to support electronic- and technology-driven activities, the availability of a reliable telephone service and a well-regulated electrical supply cannot be assumed. Cognisant of these issues, Unisa through its various institutes and bureaux constantly re-evaluates its methods and modes of teaching as well as its modalities to provide student support services.

Similarly, the Unisa library continuously evaluates its services and investigates new or alternative methods of supplying students with the most appropriate, economical and viable information service. The underlying philosophy is that all students must have equal access to learning materials which could contribute to their success in obtaining desired academic qualifications. The challenge for Unisa and its library is of two kinds. First, to ensure that graduates increase their knowledge base and in so doing achieve academic success, and secondly, and of greater consequence, is the creation of an awareness of the cardinal role that libraries and their resources play in programmes of study as well as in the process of life-long learning and self-development.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Behrens, S.J. (1993). "Obstacles to user education for off-campus students: lecturers' attitudes to library skills." In C.J. Jacob (comp.) *6th Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Kansas City, Missouri*. Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University.

Colenbrander, H. (1984). "Subject reference services in Britain, West Germany and at the University of South Africa: some reflections." *South African Journal of Library and Information Science 52*, (1) 23-7.

Dalton, G. (1989). "The journal in the post-typographic age – are we creating an electronic elite?" *South African Journal of Library and Information Science 57*, (1) 18-27.

Poller, R. *et al* (1988). The subject reference division of the Unisa Library. *Mousaion 6*, (2) 8-27.

Shillinglaw, N. (1992). "Document supply and distance education library service." *Interlending and Document Supply 20*, (4) 143-151.

— (1988). "Supplying library materials to undergraduate students of a distance teaching university." *Progressio 10*, (1) 17-26.

Suttie, M-L. (1990). "Libraries and academic support strategies in South African universities." *South African Journal of Library and Information Science 58*,(1) 98-107.

Willemse, J. (1991). "University library service dedicated to distance teaching: the University of South Africa experience." *Library Trends 39*, (4) 514-534.

— (1986). "An acquisitions policy to promote distance teaching at the University of South Africa." *Library Acquisitions: practice and theory 10*,(1) 43-53.

Williams, S. (1986). "User education in the Unisa library." *Progressio 8*, (2) 6-18.

SERVING LEARNERS IN A TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMME: ISSUES FOR CAST[1] IN JAMAICA

Terrence Bobb-Semple

Technical-vocational (tech-voc) education has expanded rapidly during the last 50 years. This phenomenon can be traced to the pervasive influence of science and technology at both the macro and micro levels of our lives. Modes of production, resource utilisation, manpower needs through to the very minute details of how we organise and perform job-tasks, socialize and enjoy recreational pursuits feel the impact of technology in one way or another. Technical information is now virtually the most important intellectual input we apply whether we are analysing, evaluating, testing, processing, designing something or an activity. Human resource development, in terms of technological know-how, has consequently become crucial to economic and social progress. Advanced countries have been aware of this for some time. The economic success enjoyed by a number of Southeast Asian countries is based on their resolute integration of technology into their socio-economic fabric and culture. In contrast, many other Third World countries have belatedly recognised the importance of technology to development. Their dilatory efforts to reorient their educational policies have placed them in a position of having to play "catch -up". One of the major obstacles they have to overcome is the negative attitude that is accorded to technical education and training, some of which is a legacy of colonialism. Limited resources and expertise, singularly or jointly create additional barriers to technological development and advancement.

For the purposes of this paper, tech-voc education is taken to embrace technical, technological and vocational education and training. It connotes not just skill and knowledge formation, but also the cultivation of mental attitudes, habits and values. It also encompasses the capacity to observe, evaluate, discriminate, and logically analyse any undertaking. The effect of these qualities bear not only on one's work and related activities, but they influence also every aspect of our socio-economic and cultural lives.

Tech-voc education ranges from the most rudimentary skills training programme to advanced and research-oriented educational activities. It is taught in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, provided at workplaces, offered at specialised job-training centres, available as continuing education courses or refresher courses, pursued through independent home study and commands the attention of researchers and project developers. In most contexts tech-voc education tends to focus on equipping or improving an individual's ability to deal with matters such as food production, water resources, public health, shelter, financial services and other comparable undertakings rather then dealing with esoteric issues and interests (Mishra, 1993).

---

[1] CAST is the acronym for the College of Arts, Science and Technology in Jamaica. The full name is seldom used.

DISTANCE TEACHING IN TECH-VOC EDUCATION

The objectives of tech-voc education are to expand educational opportunity and to provide needed skills, knowledge and competencies in technical and vocational fields. Additionally, tech-voc education provides training and learning opportunities for persons who have an occupational interest in these fields or who for various reasons wish to embrace this type of training or retraining.

Tech-voc programmes must also inform its trainees and the public at large of the pivotal role that technology and its related specialties play in national development. To achieve these aims, tech-voc programmes must be (and be seen to be) appropriate, accessible and cost-effective. Shortages of trained staff, equipment and materials, rising costs of educational programmes, restricted educational opportunities (especially in remote and rural areas) the concentration of facilities in cities, and the constraints of job and family life for the adult learner are all common barriers to educational opportunities. Thus, the unique attributes of distance education commend it as a valid alternative to classroom-based instruction, enabling many countries to attack, with success, the problems of limited access and resources (Satyanarayana, 1993).

Distance education is *an educational process in which a significant proportion of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in time and/or space from the learner*...[it is] *used at most levels of education and to teach many different subjects* (Perraton, 1990). Other defining features of distance education are the partial or complete absence of face-to-face interaction and the combination of a variety of media, e.g., print, video and audio recordings, still visuals, radio, television, and computer-dependent materials to deliver education (Rowntree, 1992). Distance education institutions may be called open universities, outreach and extra-mural centres, extension schools, colleges-of-the air or educational consortia, *inter alia*, reflecting the administrative structure used and the range of distance teaching models applied (Verduin and Clark, 1991). A variety of descriptive terms, such as independent learning, continuing education and correspondence study, signal the differences in organisation and operation, but the essential condition of teacher-learner separation is a constant. The distinguishing concepts of distance education make it eminently suitable to be deployed as an alternative to conventional classroom-based instruction.

DISTANCE LIBRARY SERVICES

Distance education programmes have demonstrated their ability to provide effective learning. Despite this proven capacity, the matters of recognition and equivalence with conventional instruction are critical issues affecting its universal acceptance. Distance learners must not feel or be made to feel disadvantaged because they have followed this mode of study, particularly as in many instances it is the only option they have to pursue their educational goals. Credibility depends not only on the quality of instruction, fundamental though that may be, but also on the adequacy of learning-support services which must include easy access to sources of information. Though needs will vary from one programme to the other, access to adequate and relevant information resources contributes greatly to ensuring equity and achieving parity. Consequently, the existence of an effective and efficient library service is a key requirement of any distance education programme of quality.

In addition to using the libraries of their home institution, distance learners often utlise external libraries. Distance librarianship depends heavily on the existence of reliable transportation, communication and postal service infrastructure between the campus, the distance students and the distance sites. Other obvious considerations affecting distance library services are costs, course requirements, learner needs and circumstances. The growth and development of modern distance education systems provide the planners of CAST's distance programmes with the benefits of their experience and knowledge.

Off-campus library systems now use a number of access solutions, of which some are based on established library practices, while some are pegged to the use of modern communication and information technologies whilst others, in recognition of local conditions, are based on the creativity and ingenuity of the information providers. These run the gamut from postal delivery, to off-campus deposit collections through to the latest online search and retrieval systems (Slade, 1994). However, since no two distance teaching systems are exactly alike, the development of a distance library service requires a careful analysis of all

100

the factors that impact on a particular situation. Thus, the library must be part of the distance education planning process from its inception. The literature reveals that this principle is not widely deployed with obvious consequences for the quality of library services that will be offered, available or possible (Villars, 1994).

Tech-voc education via distance has its own advantages and disadvantages. This is true particularly of the more high-level programmes and subjects. Providing distance library services and satisfying the development of skill-based processes are examples. On the other hand the pursuit of a tech-voc course whilst working in the area of study provides opportunities for practice and application that traditional programmes do not afford. The theory-based content of many technical, technological and vocational programmes is sufficiently defined and autonomous to permit some prepackaging of material, obviating the need for full-time access to well developed library facilities. The other side of the coin is Slade's (1994) observation that distance education *courses in this decade are not as self-contained as they used to be*. This suggests that the issue of access to adequate library services needs to be an integral part of the distance education planning process. The trend towards the convergence of and interrelationship between disciplines, combined with rapid growth in the volume and complexity of information typifies modern day scientific, technological and commercial activities. As a result, the learner is compelled to seek more than just core-subject information.

THE CAST DISTANCE-TEACHING PILOT PROJECT

Background

CAST is the principal tech-voc institution in Jamaica. It is a post-secondary, government-funded polytechnic. Established in 1958, the college provides tech-voc and professional education to Jamaicans and other Caribbean students.

CAST offers more than a hundred programmes at certificate, diploma and degree levels. The college, for administrative purposes, is divided into seven departments – Commerce, Computing, Building, Science, Hospitality/Food Science, Engineering and Technical (Teacher) Education. A significant recent addition is the Caribbean School of Architecture[2], offering Bachelor's and Master's degrees. CAST programmes, characterised by their diversity, work-related emphasis and market orientation, benefit considerably from collaboration with professional associations as well as with the industrial and business sectors. Instruction is currently delivered via full-time day, part-time evening, day-release and summer modular formats. The majority of day students are pre-employed secondary-level graduates, mainly from the city of Kingston and its environs. Traditional classroom-based group instruction is the norm, with substantial laboratory and workshop activities being a composite part of most courses.

Employed adults, for obvious reasons, opt for evening and other part-time study. The enrollment of employed adult students has implications for where and when learning is available or pursued. Because these students may have been out of a learning environment for some time, the educational backgrounds of some of them may have areas of weakness. As a result some remedial work may be necessary. This could require extensive reading, one-on-one guidance and/or the pre-study of basic subject material from the library. Experience has shown that the existence of these learning deficiencies is not restricted to those adults who are our potential distance students.

As the only institution of its kind in Jamaica, and indeed the entire anglophone Caribbean, the demand for places at CAST regularly exceeds the availability of student places for campus-based programmes. Current enrollment is approximately 6,000. This represents a slow growth rate given the age of the institution and the demand for places. Therefore, the college is firmly committed to exploring and providing alternative means of training. The gradual introduction of distance education to make CAST programmes available to more people in Jamaica and in the region is one approach (CAST, 1990).

---

[2] Caribbean School of Architecture has the same status as the other teaching departments and thus enjoys the same relationship with the college administration. Presently it is housed in the Building Department, and it operates independently. The School is accredited by the Commonwealth Association of Architects and its degrees are granted by CAST.

The Jamaica-based distance teaching network of the University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Enterprise (formerly Experiment) (UWIDITE) is the only major distance teaching effort in and of the English-speaking Caribbean. UWIDITE commenced operation in 1983. This indicates that distance education systems on a large scale are a relatively new and rare development in this part of the world (Renwick, Shale and Rao, 1992). CAST itself has been offering a handful of programmes at rural outreach centres but the project which is currently in its planning and developmental stages is the first systematic distance education effort to be undertaken by the college. An open learning centre will be the principal learning support unit for CAST's distance learners. In addition to serving the needs of distance learners this unit will also facilitate independent study, self-directed learning and provide information generally for any member of the college community (CAST, 1990).

The Certificate in Banking Distance Education Programme via distance (CIBDEP) is slated to start in October 1995 as a pilot project. The experience gained from this course will inform CAST's future decisions on distance education. The Certificate in Banking is already offered as an on-campus programme as a component of the Banking and Finance option of the Commerce department. Courses are held in the evenings and on Saturdays. CAST also offers this certificate programme at several rural centres as an outreach programme of the college. Local tuition is provided by persons who are resident in the vicinity of the outreach sites and who have the competence to serve as tutors. The Jamaica Institute of Bankers (JIOB) plays a key role in the banking education programmes at CAST. JIOB assists in a number of areas such as programme design and delivery. It has also been instrumental in the selection of this course to pilot the formalised distance teaching activities of the College (CAST, 1994).

The principal target group for the CIBDEP will be bank employees working in bank branches located outside the capital who, because of time and distance, cannot pursue the on-campus programme. The programme is designed to train staff for middle-management and supervisory positions. Hence persons between the ages of 25 and 35 will be the largest category of registrants. Gender ratios in the banks and in the on-campus programme suggest that the majority of students will be female. These variables are consistent with the experience of distance education programmes in other parts of the world.

The off-campus sites for the CIBDEP programmes will possibly be Montego Bay, Jamaica's second city which, by road, is about 123 miles from Kingston and Mandeville which is a large rural town. Mandeville is about 64 miles from Kingston. While these distances appear to be short, the geography of the terrain, road system in existence and traffic flows dictate that these journeys take no less than four hours and two hours respectively.

Teaching/learning mode(s) and media

Instruction for CIBDEP will be primarily by independent study, combined with group-based tutorials by local staff and individual contact with on-campus staff via telephone, fax and scheduled visits. Print will be the main medium of instruction supplemented by non-print materials as appropriate and available.

Library service implications

The design of library services to meet user needs must be within the context of the library resources that are available. This applies for both on- and off-campus programmes. The needs of the distance student are determined by the content, structure, objectives and requirements of a course, the distance learning mode chosen, learner circumstances and local conditions. The experience of evening students currently pursuing CAST's Certificate in Banking should prove instructive, as they are subject to a number of the constraints that distance learners are likely to suffer.

An informal survey of students pursuing this course on an on-campus basis revealed that students visited the library infrequently. Their classes are scheduled on three evenings each week, from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m., and on Saturdays from 9.00 a.m. until mid-day. On their two free evenings students, who are usually employed in the local banking system, are generally required to work for extended hours by their employers. The period after classes on Saturdays therefore has to be divided between on-campus study and commitments of a personal nature. Generally, these students seem to find the contact-hour load excessive and the library schedule unsuitable. It also appears that the high cost of course texts and the difficulties in using the library have made them very dependent on the materials that are distributed by members of faculty during their classes.

THE CAST LIBRARY

The sole on-campus library houses some 52,000 volumes and 500 serial titles relevant to college courses, and embraces both loan and reference material. Services include user instruction, loan and reference, bibliographic/off-line database searches, non-print media access and reprography. Computerisation of the library catalogue will facilitate intra-college online searches of the library collection. Eventually, the campus will be able to conduct searches in external sites once the proposed electronic network is installed and functional. Access to the Internet will be facilitated through a joint CAST/UWI link. The Audio-Visual Centre (AVC), an integral part of the library, houses the college's nonprint materials. This collection consists mainly of instructional videotapes of approximately 250 titles and 150 16mm films. The AVC also is equipped to produce video, photo, slide, graphic and micrographic materials. As a focal point of COLINET[3], the college library network, the CAST library also provides inter-library services.

DISTANCE EDUCATION INFORMATION ISSUES

The information facilities to be established to support distance learning will be affected by a number of instruction-related factors. These issues will help to determine how the existing facilities will be used to support distance education as well as what new developments will be required. As all of the decisions affecting CAST's thrust into distance education have not yet been finalised, some of the following propositions will of necessity, be speculative. The curriculum of the programme will be one of the most significant issues.

Programme content

Year 1 – Banking Law; Information Processing; Business Calculations and Economics.

Year 2 – Banking Operations; Accounting; Communication and Supervisory Skills and Behavioral Science (optional).

A modular course structure will be used. Modular programmes tend to be self-contained. Self-contained programmes tend to require inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary understandings. Hence the need for students to have access to adequate library services of quality is important.

---

[3] COLINET is the national College Libraries Information Network. It forms part of the National Information System set up by the government. This system links libraries and other info-resources in a series of networks. COLINET was set up in 1985 and currently groups 28 participating libraries across the whole spectrum of non-university tertiary education and training (e.g., business, the arts, educational, agricultural and theological) institutions. The network operates at two levels – that of an advisory body, and a committee of librarians. One of its primary aims includes the effective use of available resources through sharing and coordinated planning.
The CAST library is the focal point of the network and the structure includes sub-nodes in a number of the member libraries.

The Communication and Supervisory Skills, Economics and Information Processing modules are the ones which will most likely require supplementary and enhancement reading materials in addition to the distributed course materials. The Information Processing module will require some hands-on experience with computers.

Links with other institutions

Some of the most important sources of the type of support information needed for the CIBDEP programmes are lodged within the banking system in Jamaica. The existing formal collaboration of banks with the college on this project suggest that access to these resource materials should not present difficulties.

The proposed sites for the CIBDEP programme already have within their communities academic and public libraries. CAST students will be encouraged to use these resources where possible or feasible.

Communication issues

In addition to the existence of a reasonable road system, other communication links are postal services, telephone (voice and data), and the organs of the mass media. All of these communication devices will be used to support the CIBDEP programme. An expansion of the college's courier/messenger service to support this thrust cannot be discounted. The postal service and/or college courier will be the principal channels used for the delivery and return of materials between the main campus and the remote sites.

In the context of the above, the following library service arrangements appear to be feasible for CAST's distance education programmes.

LIBRARY SERVICES TO SUPPORT DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AT CAST

Facilities and staffing

Distance students will be served by an outreach centre to be established at each site. Centralisation of services at the outreach sites should not be problematic as students will have to go to these sites for other programme-related activities. Also distances to the outreach centres will be considerably less than those which a trip to Kingston would require. Each centre will be equipped with at least a telephone, a fax machine and an audio cassette player. If resources permit, a video-cassette player and a monitor/receiver as well as a personal computer with printer and a modem will also be provided.

A resident tutor/supervisor and a clerical assistant will be appointed to each centre.

User orientation/instruction

Students accepted for entry to CIBDEP would be required to attend the campus for academic registration, orientation and the receipt of the initial batch of course materials. Library registration and instruction could be scheduled to coincide with this initial visit. Information brochures on the library and available services could be distributed at this time. This and other information on the distance programme would also be lodged at the outreach centres.

Off-campus collections

A core collection would be deposited at each outreach centre for borrowing and reference. This material would be selected by the campus librarians in consultation with faculty. This collection would include print and nonprint material, and would be managed (check-out and return, etc.) by the outreach centre staff, who would be trained in basic circulation procedures. Access to the collections of tertiary institutions in the vicinity of outreach centres would be arranged by the CAST library. This would most likely be limited to reading privileges. Students would also be encouraged to use local public libraries. The college recognises that, except for general reference purposes, these collections would be of limited value to the CIBDEP students.

Requests

Requests to the campus library for information, reference assistance or literature searches would be received by telephone, fax or mail depending on the urgency and extent of the request. For administrative convenience requests would be received by the outreach centres and transmitted *en bloc* to the campus library according to a pre-arranged schedule. Ample notice of this schedule will be given to students and other channels of notification will be used on an ongoing basis to provide this and other library related information. At this stage of CAST's distance teaching initiatives, a dedicated 24-hour hotline or staff assigned specifically to handle distance learners requests is neither essential nor affordable. Slade's (1994) recommendations provide indicators for the direction that CAST could go when the number of distance learners and range of programmes warrant such developments.

In a programme like the Certificate in Banking, sources of information revealed by the search strategy in response to a request would be sent to the outreach centre for delivery to the student. The College is not in a position to maintain a special or reserved collection for its distance programmes. Consequently, the same collection has to serve the needs of both on- and off-campus students. To ensure equitable access, off-campus users would be encouraged to make early and specific requests. This approach also enables students to develop good time-management and learning organisation skills, all of which will be of value in their everyday life.

Where time constraints exist students will have the option to contact the library directly. The apportioning of costs attached to these services is to be determined by the college.

Delivery service

Materials would be delivered to distance learners via the outreach centre by post, by college courier or any other reliable means. If only a few pages are involved and there is an urgent need for the information it could be faxed to the student.

Electronic access

The online catalogue, computer network and the Internet access being instituted and installed at CAST should be of great benefit to distance learners and the library. It will permit catalogue and database searches via modem from the distance sites. It will also allow for E-mail communication and the storage of requests and responses. Delays associated with manual systems should not occur and independent learning activities based on information delivered in real time should be possible (Britton and Combe, 1991).

CONCLUSION

The above is an outline of the main user services which CAST distance learners can expect to satisfy their library and information needs. While these observations are focussed on the pilot project, as the distance teaching initiatives of CAST develop and grow, changes will occur. That is what development is all about. At the very least it is anticipated that the instructional and library services that are developed for distance learners will also have a positive effect on the information activities related to the college's efforts in conventional education. The modularization of courses, the increased use of instructional technology and the demands created by self-paced, individualised study will certainly help the college to be seen as giving genuine support to open and independent learning.

The commitment of CAST to provide tech-voc education to all Jamaicans whether they live in rural or urban communities, in the hills or on the plains, in isolated or populated areas, marks a new departure for the college and augurs well for national development.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Britton, R. and D.B. Combe (1991). "Providing off-campus library services using academic/public library cooperation and remote access to sophisticated online systems." In C. Jacob (comp.) *Fifth Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings.* Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University.

College of Arts, Science and Technology (1992). *CAST Third Development Plan, 1991-2001: the way forward.* Kingston: College of Arts, Science and Technology.

Mishra, A.K. (1993). "Technical/vocational education in India." In R.V.R. Chandrasekhara Rao (ed.) *Technical and vocational programmes through distance education.* Hyderabad: Dr. D.B. Ambedkar Open University.

Perraton, H. (1991). *Administrative structures for distance education.* Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

Renwick, W., D. Shale and C. Rao (1992). *Distance education at the University of the West Indies.* Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

Rowntree, D. (1992). *Exploring open and distance education.* London: Kogan Page.

Satyanarayana, H. (1993). Vocational education at a distance: an emerging scenario. In R.V.R. Chandrasekhara Rao (ed.) *Technical and vocational programmes through distance education.* Hyderabad: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University.

Slade, Alexander L. (1994). *Library services to Canadian distance learners: an overview.* Paper presented at a Commonwealth Library Association Workshop on Library Services to Distance Learners Kingston, Jamaica.

Verduin J.R. and T. A. Clark (1991). *Distance education: the foundations of effective practice.* San Francisco: Josey Bass.

Villars, John A. (1994). *The state of distance education in Ghana.* Paper presented at a Commonwealth Library Association Workshop on Library Services to Distance Learners. Kingston, Jamaica.

LIBRARY SERVICES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS AT MASSEY UNIVERSITY: SOME MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Celia Bockett, Lucy Marsden and Joan Pitchforth

BACKGROUND

Extramural teaching

Distance learning at tertiary level in New Zealand is normally carried out by correspondence, rather than via a network of sites distant from the main campus as is common in some other countries. Massey University, in Palmerston North, had for some 30 years a virtual monopoly in New Zealand over distance education, usually referred to as extramural courses. Other institutions are now involved, but Massey still has by far the largest number of distance students, with a roll of some 17,400 in 1994. In addition the university has over 11,000 internal students.

In 1960 a college of the Victoria University of Wellington was established in Palmerston North to offer extramural courses in the Arts to students throughout the country. The students, initially just a few hundred, were mainly teachers improving their qualifications and people doing courses for personal interest. In 1963 the Palmerston North University College merged with the Massey Agricultural College, founded in 1926, and the resulting institution became Massey University. The next 30 years saw a steady rise in both the range of courses offered and student numbers. Until 1979 only first- and second-year courses were available extramurally, and those wishing to complete their degree had to attend Massey as internal students for their final year. Subsequently they have been able to study for a whole undergraduate degree at a distance, and since 1986 selected postgraduate courses have also been available on an extramural basis. The total number of papers[1] offered, at a distance, has grown rapidly, from 105 in 1974 to 351 in 1984, reaching 600 in 1994. Selected subjects from every faculty can now be studied extramurally, though the biggest enrollments are in the Social Sciences, Humanities, Business Studies and Education faculties. The majority of teaching staff in these faculties are involved in teaching both extramural and internal students. The extramural student roll was 7,590 in 1974, 16,460 in 1984, and 17,400 in 1994. Most students are part-time, taking on average two papers a year, but as the overall costs of being an internal student rise, some students are now opting to study from home as full-time extramural students. Students come from all walks of life and from all parts of New Zealand as well as overseas. The majority are mature students, many studying to upgrade their qualifications or preparing for a new occupation without leaving their present job. In these respects they would appear to be typical of distance learners in other countries (Shklanka, 1990). A number live in isolated rural areas with no access to other tertiary institutions, but a growing proportion (75% in 1994) are based in university centres. These students make a deliberate choice, in many cases clearly enforced by their employment circumstances, to study at a distance through Massey, rather than attend lectures at the university in their hometown.

---

[1] An undergraduate degree consists of 21 papers.

The method of teaching is based on the use of a series of printed study guides sent out on enrollment and during the year, which often include collections of readings reprinted from published sources. Most courses have traditionally involved a few days of on-campus tuition during the university vacations, but this has in recent years become less frequent and is sometimes replaced by off-campus courses in regional centres.

LIBRARY SERVICES

From the outset it was recognised that extramural students would need additional reading material to supplement that provided in the study guides. A postal library operation was established and this has grown steadily in both the range of services offered and the scale of the operation. The philosophy is to give extramural students access to library service as nearly equivalent as possible to that enjoyed by internal students. Students may currently request any of the following:

- The loan of a specific book, usually one referred to in their study guide. Books are delivered by courier, and issued for a period of three weeks.
- A photocopy of a specific journal article or single chapter of a book. (The student is allowed to keep the article, but copyright regulations are observed.)
- A photocopy of past examination papers for their course.
- Information/material on a particular subject. Library staff will supply either a selection of books and/or articles, or a bibliography from which the student can select.

The library endeavours to hold copies of all books recommended in the study guides. As the number of students who are working on original research is growing, particularly at postgraduate level, many requests are received for books and journal articles which are not held. Since 1991, the inter-library loan service has been made available to extramural students.

In addition there is a well-established programme of library instruction, general and subject specific, to help students both acquire general library research skills and make good use of the library when they attend on-campus courses. The library promotes this service and encourages teaching staff to build bibliographic instruction in as an integral part of the on-campus programme. Additional professional staffing is also provided in the evenings and at weekends, while on-campus courses are running, to ensure adequate reference services are available. Table 1 provides statistics for the user services provided in academic year 1993.

Massey University Library.

Services	Total
Book requests:	19,506
Photocopying requests:	
articles and chapters	11,803
examination papers	4,054
Subject requests:	2,091

Table 1. Requests for services from distance learners during 1993.

The staff providing the service are:

- three full-time professional staff;
- three full-time library assistants; and
- three-and-a-half equivalent part-time library assistants during the academic year only.

In addition during the busiest time of the year about 65 hours per week are contributed to subject searches by members of the Library's Information Services staff and dedicated part-time professional staff. Approximately 45 hours per week are spent by clerical staff photocopying and dispatching materials for extramural students.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Massey University Library is currently addressing a number of management issues connected with this service. Some are unique to Massey's situation, but most are common to all distance education institutions. Those discussed here are as follows:

- communication;
- overseas students;
- centralised library service or a network of distant libraries;
- collection policies;
- financial resources;
- subject requests; and
- ethical issues relating to subject searches.

Communication

One of the findings of a 1984 survey (Auger and Tremaine, 1987) was that there were a significant number of students who were unaware of the library service, which highlighted the need for a marketing strategy. Consequently, a number of communication channels, formal and informal, are used by the library to reach distance students.

At the time of enrollment all distance students are now sent a library information booklet which gives details of the services provided and methods of communicating with the library: mail, phone, fax and E-mail. Copies are also sent to all public and tertiary libraries in the country, so that local librarians can direct our students to our services. Regular newsletters are also sent to students through the year.

Over the last five years the Extramural Librarian has visited groups of students throughout New Zealand, made possible by the provision of a travel fund established by management. Typically the librarian visits six to eight centres per annum, ranging from major cities to small isolated rural towns, publicising services. The personal contact is greatly appreciated by the students and allows valuable feedback to the library about perceptions of services. The main target group for these visits is first-year students who are least likely to know about the service or how to use it effectively.

A communication concern expressed by many students relates to use of the telephone. Extramural library staff are currently only available until 6:00 p.m. and many students wish to telephone later than that, either because of daytime commitments or because the telephone rate is cheaper after 6:00 p.m. Although we have an answer phone which is heavily used, many students would appreciate being able to talk directly to a staff member and get an immediate response to their enquiries in the evenings. This is a matter we intend to address in the coming year.

The possibility of providing a toll-free telephone service has been frequently discussed but at present we do not have the financial resources to support this. It is possible that increasing use of E-mail in the future will partly ameliorate this problem.

Overseas students

The fact that some 400 of the university's extramural students are living overseas raises some management issues for the library. Most of these students are New Zealanders who wish to continue their university studies while temporarily out of the country. Typically they are attached to embassies, members of the armed forces, teachers, business people or accompanying a partner who has been transferred overseas. Currently we have students in areas as diverse as the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, Japan, Britain, the Middle East and Sweden. We are anxious that they should receive the same level of service as that provided to New Zealand students but in reality we find that this raises many practical problems.

First, although all material for overseas students is sent airmail (at their expense), postal delays of several weeks are quite common. We can send books by international courier post if requested by the student. This is a much faster and more reliable service but has the drawback of being even more expensive for the students than airmail postage.

Second, political and religious factors in some countries can lead to customs or censorship problems resulting in non-delivery of material. In this case the first the student knows about it is when we send an overdue notice for a book he or she never received! Wherever possible we try to send overseas students photocopied journal articles or a chapter from a book avoiding return postage costs. Faxing articles is the quickest and safest method of delivery, though again this is expensive.

We always extend the issue period for books sent overseas and do not recall them before the due date. The effect of this may be to deny other students the opportunity to use the same book. We may need to consider restricting access for overseas students to titles of which we hold multiple copies. However, this would have serious consequences for these students for whom Massey is often their only source of material. These problems will be even more acute when extramural papers operate on a semester system.

A few overseas students manage to negotiate use of a local tertiary library but experience two main problems. One is that such libraries may charge exorbitant fees for access, and another that they lack relevant material, particularly for the many courses that have a New Zealand focus. Students in Australian cities are usually more fortunate in terms of these matters than those in other countries.

Centralised library service or a network of distant libraries

The Open University in the United Kingdom has contracted with local libraries to provide service for their students. Such an approach would seem to have two advantages. First, students access the libraries directly selecting their own materials and learning library research skills along with specialised subject knowledge. Second, it may be more cost effective to take advantage of existing institutions and collections.

Massey's approach, on the other hand, has always been to focus on a centralised postal delivery system. We are aware that many students do use local libraries, whether public, tertiary or company, to supplement our services[2]. Those living in some of the six other university centres can negotiate borrowing rights with their local university library. New Zealand libraries have long had a reputation for informal cooperation, which has made it possible for extramural students to use other libraries. However, the more competitive atmosphere of a market economy prevailing in recent years means libraries of all types are now less inclined to service patrons other than their own. We have therefore become very cautious about referring extramural students to other libraries and emphasise in all our publicity that we are their "official supplier of information". Certainly, we have the obligation to meet the needs of our students, and they should be using our services as a first resort.

Moreover, it would not be feasible from a resource point of view to contract with a network of libraries to provide service as the Open University has done. In New Zealand the public libraries are generally smaller than their British equivalents and lack substantial collections of university-related materials. An attempt was made, however, to give extramural students the benefit of direct access to library materials relevant to their courses. In the late 1970s small special collections of core reading materials were deposited in libraries (mainly polytechnic and community college libraries) around the country. There were a number of problems associated with this service, the most important being the practical difficulties of keeping them up-to-date and relevant as the interests of students in a particular vicinity changed. Inevitably, the collections were not as extensive as the students would have liked, which led to some dissatisfaction, and in 1992 these collections were withdrawn.

---

[2] Of those surveyed in 1984, 70% had used other libraries to support their study (Auger and Tremaine, 1987). Anecdotal evidence suggests that this figure is much lower for 1994.

Students in the Auckland area now have access to a library, although it is not one designed specifically for their needs. In 1993, a Massey campus was established at Albany, north of Auckland and, some 600 kilometres from Palmerston North. A limited, though rapidly expanding, range of internal courses are taught at this campus, and some of the material held in its small library is also relevant to courses being taken extramurally by students in the region. These students have borrowing rights there, and growing numbers are making use of the facility to access the catalogue, use bibliographic tools and lodge requests.

Collection policies

Prompt delivery of materials is crucial to the success of any postal library service. However good the service ethic or streamlined the procedures, a fast turnaround cannot be achieved unless all the items referred to in study guides are held. Multiple copies must be held of books in heavy demand. A combination of a rapid expansion in the range of courses offered in the past ten years and inadequate library staff resources has meant that liaison with course controllers has been minimal, and the study guides have not been checked systematically, resulting in some gaps in holdings. Heavy duplication of titles recommended for large undergraduate courses was the norm in the early years of extramural teaching, and as many as 20 copies or more were purchased. A change of policy a few years ago saw this duplication drastically reduced, but it is now recognised that this was a mistake and holdings of some titles are inadequate. The demand for recommended books is such that by the middle of the year fewer than 50% of the requests received in a day can be satisfied from the shelves. Holds are placed, and books recalled from borrowers, but some students currently have to wait an unacceptably long time to receive their requests.

A concerted effort is currently under way to make good deficiencies in the collection and thus improve the turnaround time. Some of the additional staff resource funded by the library fee (see below) is being used to check the study guides systematically as they come into the library, and order titles not held. Use of key titles is being monitored and urgent orders are placed for extra copies of those with four holds or more. *Books in print* is checked for recent titles to strengthen holdings in subject areas known to be inadequately covered. Extramural staff are in contact with some course controllers offering assistance with reading lists, and liaising closely with acquisitions staff about strategies for ensuring that early advice is received about recommended reading. Duplication of recommended titles is now at a higher rate than for the past few years, a ratio of one copy per ten students being applied where possible. This will not be economically feasible, however, with some of the very large undergraduate courses, which have enrollments of up to 600.

It will be important to maintain and intensify this more proactive approach in the future if the number of courses taught extramurally by the university continues to increase. Despite attempts in recent years to restrict expansion, each year has seen more papers offered; a further 43 papers will be available at a distance for the first time in 1995. The majority of these papers will have already been taught internally, but the move to extramural teaching in any subject does have major implications for collection development.

One way of ensuring that distance students have fast access to library materials is to hold multiple copies of the most heavily used titles in a special collection reserved solely for them. This library has such a collection, but is currently reviewing its usefulness. The advantages of such a separate collection must be offset against the need for ongoing maintenance to keep it up to date and the fact that internal students are denied access to these books.

Another major problem inhibiting the prompt fulfilment of requests is the large number of books not available for loan. This includes reference books, items on closed reserve (mainly set textbooks and recommended readings) and the legal, statistical and governmental materials held in the Official Publications

Room. Again, the ordering of borrowable copies is the most effective way of overcoming the problem, though this is not possible where items are out of print. Offering students a photocopy of single chapters from these books is another solution, but this does not always meet their needs.

Financial resources

In the past service to extramural students has not been separately budgeted for, reflecting the fact that all bibliographic and staff resources have been largely integrated. The only exception to this was the book acquisitions budget. A separate allocation was made for the purchase of multiple copies of heavily used titles, recognising that our extramural obligations do require a higher stocking rate than would be necessary if all our students were on campus. (Most of these multiple copies can, of course, be used by any student, internal or extramural). Separate funding was also made available for the deposit collections from acquisitions funds, and this was supplemented by a generous annual grant from the Extramural Students' Society.

Until 1994, extramural students had to pay for some services as they used them. The library paid all outward postage, but the students had to pay the return postage. This deterred some students from borrowing books. In addition, they were charged for all photocopying, which engaged the library in time consuming recording and billing procedures. In 1993, a decision was made to charge all extramural students enrolled in 1994 an annual fee of (NZ)$25.00 for library services in addition to tuition fees. This supplementary funding is intended to cover all postal charges, including return postage of books, all photocopying, the purchase of some additional multiple copies for the collection, and extra staffing to improve turnaround time and offer new services. When calculating the amount of the fee, allowance was made for a doubling of demand, on the grounds that if people were paying an identifiable fee for a service they would be more likely to use it. Demand has certainly increased, but by only about 50% to June 1994. Turnaround time has, with the exception of two peak load periods, been reduced, and library staff have the satisfaction of knowing that all their time is going into servicing student requests directly, rather than into clerical and billing procedures. Moreover, a substantial proportion of the revenue from the fee has been allocated to strengthening the collection.

The introduction of this fee has, however, caused some problems. Firstly, considerable resistance has come from students who do not use the service, either because the nature of their course does not require it, or because they have access to other libraries. Secondly, it unfortunately coincided with substantial tightening up of the library's circulation policies, including a limit on the number of books a student could have out at any time, a limit to the number of renewals per book, and higher fines. Some students have therefore associated the fee with an apparent deterioration of service. Thirdly, students attending on-campus courses in May put in large numbers of requests for photocopied articles rather than pay (NZ)10¢ a page to do the copying themselves, which badly overloaded the system for a month. And fourthly, the fee has not been consistently applied, since there are other, smaller, groups of students working off-campus who also make use of the library's postal service but who have not paid the fee. All these issues are currently being addressed by library management.

Subject requests

Following expansion of extramural teaching to third-year and postgraduate students, a subject request service was introduced to meet their specialised information needs. A subject request is defined as one requiring a database search, rather than a general request for two or three books on a subject. Demand has grown steadily, and some 2,000 requests are now received annually, from students at all levels.

These searches are done by professionally trained staff. As the professional staff resource within the extramural section is limited, a decision was made in 1993 that reference librarians would conduct the majority of these searches. However, since the peak demand for subject searches coincides with that for reference services, there have been major difficulties in maintaining an acceptable turnaround time. Our response in 1994 has been to employ part-time professional staff specifically to perform this work, and this approach is likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

The volume of requests coming from first- and second-year students has highlighted the need for library staff to liaise more closely with course controllers, encouraging them to make their guides more self-contained, with fuller bibliographies and accompanied by collections of readings. Students will then be able to request specific items, rather than material on a subject. Course controllers are also being encouraged to reduce the number of "free-choice" assignments for large undergraduate classes. (For example, a first-year anthropology class was asked to write on any endangered culture of their choice. Subject areas requested ranged from information on a particular group of Eskimos to Paraguayan Indians as a community.)

Ethical issues relating to subject searches

While efforts have been made to limit the number of subject requests coming from first- and second-year students, we are concerned that there are ethical issues involved. Many students are highly motivated and aiming for excellent grades by exploring their topics beyond the required material. This is particularly apparent in the present competitive environment. Is it right for librarians to restrict their access to information?

Another ethical issue is how much research we do for postgraduate students, who submit 32% of all subject requests. The more searching and selecting of material the library does, the less likely the students are to acquire the research skills which are an important part of their study programmes. Also, however hard we try to provide material with a balanced perspective, our own biases may inevitably influence the results.

Another factor of concern to management is the staff resource required to meet postgraduate needs. The subject requests are time-consuming, each taking on average 45 minutes, since they are more complex than those for students working at a lower level. Furthermore, because these students do not have direct access to our catalogue, they tend to request a high proportion of material not held by the library. This must be frustrating for the students, and it shows up in high rates of inter-library borrowing.

CONCLUSIONS

In the past few years significant changes have been made to extramural library procedures, with the aim of streamlining the service, improving response times and ensuring that students receive the most appropriate material for assignments. Much of the focus has so far been within the extramural section itself, but future modifications to the service are likely to result from shifting the focus outside the library.

Closer liaison with course controllers is vital to the success of our operation, and this is a high priority for library staff at present. We are emphasising to them that early advice of student numbers, course content, assignment topics and reading lists is the only way we can acquire suitable quantities of material in time to meet demand. We are also offering course controllers assistance in preparing appropriate reading lists, and bibliographies for specific assignments. All of these activities will remedy deficiencies in the collection as will a programme of targeted purchasing made possible by improved staffing in the library in 1994. Another outcome of closer cooperation should be an increased awareness on the part of academic staff of the library and information needs of their students. It may also lead to some resolution of our ethical issues relating to subject searches.

We also need to consider the students' point of view and how to reduce their sense of isolation. This can be done in two ways. We can improve personal communication and customer care by extending the hours that telephones are staffed, ensuring that all written notes are signed in full, sending frequent newsletters with photographs of staff and extending our visits to students.

Direct access to the catalogue would also enhance communication and empower students. It is the intention to extend the existing E-mail facility to include catalogue access. A further option being explored is that of making bibliographic databases on CD-ROM available, either via the campus network or loaded onto our catalogue.

An imminent change which will affect our service is use of the semester system. Until now courses have been taught across a full academic year, March – October, but the university is moving to a system of two 15-week semesters per year. One third of all extramural courses will in 1995 be compressed into one of two fifteen-week semesters, and this proportion will increase in subsequent years. It will be vital for the library to fill requests faster, which will mean more staff and more multiple copies. One possible solution would be to expand the collection reserved for extramural use only. Another could be to reduce the loan period, but in view of postal delays already experienced, this option is not favoured.

Factors influencing the way we manage library services in the future will be a combination of external forces and our own efforts to improve our performance in satisfying students' needs. What is certain is that demand for library services will continue, and that challenging issues will need to be addressed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Auger, Phillipa and Marianne Tremaine (1987). *Users and non-users: an investigation into the reasons why the majority of extramural students at Massey University do not use the extramural library service.* Palmerston North: Massey University.

Shklanka, O. (1990). "Off-campus library services: a literature review." *Research in distance education 2*, (4) 2-11.

A LIBRARY SERVICE TO DISTANCE LEARNERS: WHAT SHOULD THE LIBRARY PROVIDE?

Anthony K. Cavanagh and Joan Tucker

INTRODUCTION

The education of the tertiary student should involve a partnership between the student, the academic(s) responsible for the course and the library of the institution. The distance student has particular requirements: quality study guides and readers and access to the library collection of an institution which may be hundreds or perhaps thousands of kilometres distant. How these requirements are met varies from country to country and we will be looking at the provision of a library service to distance learners from the perspective of Deakin University in Victoria, Australia, a five-site, multi-campus university which has offered a library delivery service to its students from the Geelong campus since 1978. Although the facilities of all five campuses are used in meeting requests from distance students, for this discussion we will consider only the service provided by the Geelong campus.

In this article, we will briefly summarise the trends in the provision of library services, acknowledging that students in developing countries face many more problems than their western counterparts. We will then consider the involvement of each of the partners in the education process, emphasising that while it is easy to agree that a library service will be provided, how it will operate must be carefully considered. Finally we will discuss what the library should provide to distance students including the place of readers (i.e., books of reading supplied as part of the course material for a unit), set textbooks versus recommended reading, availability of reference service to students, and the need for the library to publicise its service and act as guarantor for its students to enable them to borrow from other libraries.

AVAILABILITY OF LIBRARY SERVICES

Library services to distance students can be provided in many ways. Service can be based on delivery of library materials direct to students' homes which is the method generally adopted in Australia, Canada and other countries where students may be geographically quite remote from the institutions at which they are studying.

Alternatively, materials can be placed in community colleges and satellite libraries where students attend in person to borrow items and to receive reader education. This system is used in many areas of the United States, particularly where there is a wide enough distribution of suitable libraries within reasonable distance of students.

In advanced countries emphasis on the provision of services to distance students is turning increasingly towards electronic access to libraries and their resources. This starts with the use of electronic mail and dial-in access to university and college catalogues to place orders for materials and is complemented by access to online subject specific databases, CD-ROM networks, and the vast array of resources available through the Internet as well as access to full text databases and journals.

Electronic access to services and resources may be complemented by high speed delivery of books, audiovisual items and photocopies of journal articles. In Australia, for instance, some of the university libraries utilise air express courier delivery so that their students located all over Australia receive materials within 24 to 48 hours of lodging requests.

The provision of library services to distance students in developing countries presents a very different picture. Watson (1993) points out that many distance students do not have electricity in their homes let alone computers and modems. Telecommunications in some countries are also costly, of poor quality and subject to interference. The world of the virtual library and the information super highway is simply not a reality for students in these countries. In many instances aspects of social infrastructure such as postal and courier services are poorly developed and prone to delays and losses. In addition, library and educational services may not be widely distributed throughout a Third World country and those that exist may be inadequately funded and resourced.

In a report on library services to distance learners in Canada, India and the U.K. (Open University), Watson (1992) notes that while many Canadian distance learners have library materials sent to them by mail, many students in India have access to library materials only if they go on site and borrow in person. She also notes that where delivery service is provided in India, materials are generally despatched by rail.

Clearly, the provision of reading materials by libraries to distance learners presents enormous problems in many developing countries. Despite these limitations, the effort must be made by institutions which provide distance education programmes to ensure that they cater for the information requirements of their users. To do this properly requires the involvement of the students, academics and the library.

THE STUDENT/LECTURER/LIBRARY PARTNERSHIP

Numerous surveys and evaluations of library usage paint a sometimes depressing picture of library usage by students, summarised by Mays (1986) thus: *undergraduate students still do not use libraries very much because they still do not have to.*

The reasons are many and varied and include:

- a poor school system which does not encourage library use;
- inadequate library facilities in schools and communities so that *libraries are completely foreign to many students, and consequently the use of the library does not feature at all in these students customary framework of studying* (Behrens, 1993);
- student attitudes e.g., their reason for enrollment at a university is to gain a qualification, and they show little interest in doing more study than they have to;
- a lack of appreciation or knowledge by students of the resources of the library and the assistance available from staff;
- as stated by Mays, above, they do not have to: *they can do quite acceptable work, in some cases possibly better work, without* [having to use the library] (Branscomb, 1940); and
- the nature of many units in science, technology and management does not require students to study beyond their set textbooks, study guides and readers (Cavanagh, 1994).

Yet many students are good library users and, given encouragement by faculty and by a proactive library reader education programme, others may also become good users. Behrens (1993) in her survey at the University of South Africa in Pretoria found that the attitudes of staff played an important part in shaping student attitudes towards the library. Thus, students are much more likely to use the libraries if the lecturer requires them to read beyond their set texts and study guides and readers, if he or she sets challenging assignments which require additional work on the part of the student, and if their marks reflect the effort put in by the student to read more widely.

Deakin University Library

Year	No. of Requests	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Requests per Student
1978	1479	1250	1.2
1979	2705	2121	1.3
1980	3808	2651	1.4
1981	5479	3037	1.8
1982	6146	3276	1.9
1983	10230	3650	2.8
1984	13229	4043	3.3
1985	13915	4427	3.15
1986	14110	4619	3.05
1987	20456	4334	4.7
1988	24650	4087	6
1989	28459	4682	6.1
1990	29697	4681	6.3
1991	39049	5283	7.4
1992	49126	6123	8
1993	58191	6749	8.6

Table 1. Requests from distance learning students, 1978-1993

The distance student, working in isolation and lacking face-to-face contact with lecturers and tutors, may be heavily dependent on their home institution library for support. We discuss in more detail later in this article the factors we believe a library should consider in establishing a library delivery service to its distance students. However, both the academic and the library have their part to play in supporting the distance student. The academic and the library staff must work together to ensure that books are ordered and available before the unit is taught, that adequate numbers of multiple copies of recommended reading items are ordered and that articles not available in the library are provided for the counter-reserve collection. Librarians need to be proactive in their involvement with faculty during the writing of new course material for external units, in offering library sessions at summer schools or weekend schools when distance students are on campus, and in ensuring that new students receive information about the library (preferably a detailed library guide) in their enrollment packages. Such persistence pays off. At Deakin University a library delivery service has been available since 1978. Publicity about this service has been extensive. Table 1, shown above, illustrates the growth of this service since it was introduced. Table 2 provides data on the level of requests from distance education students for a variety of media from 1986–1993.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF A LIBRARY SERVICE FOR DISTANCE LEARNERS

What then needs to be done to provide a satisfactory library service to distance students?

It is noticeable that in general it is librarians rather than distance educators and academics who are most concerned about the provision of library services to distance students. Their concern is embodied in various guidelines to library services which have been available since 1981 but which still apply only to the United States (Pickett, 1990), Australia (Crocker, 1982) and Canada (Canadian Library Association, 1993). Preliminary guidelines for learners in developing countries were recently proposed by Watson (1992). The guidelines are similar in their coverage and, while generally non-prescriptive, seek to provide qualitative statements for the guidance of providers of distance education programmes.

The Australian guidelines are particularly useful because in addition to the brief statements of guidelines under nine areas of interest, they contain a series of questions which can act as a checklist to assist providers in assessing the quality and level of the service they are offering. The guidelines and checklist questions for "Staff" and "Access" are given as examples in the appendix to this paper.

The basic philosophies underlying all provision of library services to distance students are that they should receive a service at least equal to that available to on-campus students, and that *access to library resources is essential for quality in post secondary education regardless of where the learner and the programmes are located* (Canadian Library Association, 1993). These guidelines further contend that *the parent institution is responsible for ensuring that its distance learners have access to appropriate library resources*. The guidelines also stress adequately publicising the library service and the provision of reader education wherever possible. However, within Australia, Canada, and other countries where distance students live throughout the country and rarely attend campus, it is essential that guidelines adequately address the requirements for a library postal delivery service.

In planning the service, the library must address many questions:

- What staffing will be required and how many professional staff will be employed?
- Will the library try to supply sets of "core" recommended material to study centres or extended campus sites or will it provide all library services from a central library?
- How can the library ensure that it has adequate stocks of multiple copies of recommended books for its distance as well as its on-campus students?
- How can the library obtain reading lists for new and remade external courses?
- Who will have the responsibility for ordering material – library staff or academic staff?
- Will the library accept requests from distance students by telephone? If so, will it provide a toll-free service and answer phone?
- Will it lend prescribed (set) textbooks or only recommended and other readings?
- Should there be a limit on the number of items that distance students can have on loan at one time and/or should there be a limit on the number of items they can borrow for a given unit or subject?
- What is a reasonable loan period and will students be allowed to renew items? Will students be able to renew by phone?
- Will it provide photocopies of articles? If so, will they be supplied free or will a charge be made? If it is decided to charge students, what is an equitable rate and how will the library administer the service?

- Will the library accept subject requests (general requests for information) and if so, will it carry out computer and CD-ROM searches on the students' behalf? Will it charge the students for these computer searches?
- Will it try to obtain inter-library loans for undergraduates or will these be available to postgraduates only? Will students be charged for inter-library loans?

These and many other questions must be decided before the service is put in place. And of course, the university or library administration must be prepared to fund the service adequately with sufficient staff if the library is to pay more than lip service to the notion of offering a library service to distance students.

SOME ISSUES

Supply of course materials to students

In the provision of course materials to distance students, several approaches may be followed. That of the Open University is to supply monographs which are nearly fully self-contained in what Carty refers to as *learning package(s)* which contain *all the materials which the students require for the successful completion of their courses* (Carty, 1991). Others will provide a study guide to the course which is keyed to one or more books which the student needs to buy. These books may be a commercial text or specially produced by the institution for the course. A common practice in Australia is to provide a study guide and reader of supplementary articles and excerpts which, in the ideal case, would include *a wide range of critical, comparative, and supplementary material chosen around the educational objectives of the course* (Shillinglaw, 1992).

Additional prescribed books which students are expected to purchase (set textbooks) may or may not be required to complement the study guides and readers.

Deakin University follows the last practice. In addition, a "unit guide" is supplied for each individual course unit which provides an overview of the unit and lists set textbooks and additional recommended reading. Practice will vary in other institutions but the library may need to answer these questions:

- Will it provide photocopies of articles if the institution does not provide a reader?
- Will the library purchase and supply to students multiple copies of set textbooks?
- What numbers should the library hold of recommended reading books?

These points are considered below.

Provision of books of readings

In the case of excerpts from books and journal and newspaper articles, we believe that these items should be collected together and reproduced in the form of a reader which is supplied to students, preferably free, or at the very most, on a cost recovery basis. This should be supplied to all students by the institution as part of their course package, along with their study guides and notes without their having to make a specific request. Readers should be supplied by the faculty, distance education department or whatever department is responsible for the provision of study guides to students. They should not be supplied by the library. Copyright issues must be addressed and will vary from country to country. Copyright law in Australia, for instance, permits copying of articles and excerpts from books for inclusion in readers after the payment of a licence fee when such materials are produced for educational purposes and are not sold for profit.

Cost advantages of providing readers

Cavanagh and Tucker (1993) examined the cost of delivering library materials to students, based on the Off-Campus Library Service at Deakin University in Australia. They showed that the average cost of making and supplying a single photocopy of a journal article was approximately (Aus)$4 (or US$3). This included staff costs of providing the photocopy as well as photocopying and postage costs. The cost of sending a book by courier was (Aus)$6.40 (or US$4.50). The provision of readers free to students is much cheaper than having the library handle repeated requests for the same items. An examination of the costs of giving readers free to a class of 100 students at Deakin University for example, reveals that it would cost (Aus)$800 ($8 x 100) plus postage costs, say another (Aus)$200 ($2 x 100), giving a total of (Aus)$1,000.

By comparison, if each of the 100 students were to ask to be sent only five individual journal articles the cost would be (Aus)$20 ($4 x 5) each or (Aus)$2,000 in total. These figures demonstrate that there are significant cost savings to an institution in giving readers to students. At Deakin University, readers are provided free to distance students along with their study guides, newsletters and course notes. The production cost, per reader, to the university is of the order of (Aus)$6–$8.

Educational advantages of providing readers

Distance students are disadvantaged in terms of access to library materials as compared with on-campus students. There is always an inherent delay in receiving items through delivery services no matter how efficient the service is. Of course, for students in developing countries this delay represents a real barrier to the successful completion of their studies. Students who are required to obtain materials in person from community colleges or satellite libraries may experience difficulties due to distance from the library or to work commitments which limit the times at which they can visit the library. The provision of readers to students by the institution alleviates the problems of delays in provision of the items through the library.

It may be argued that it is spoon feeding students to collect together articles and excerpts in this way. It is certainly desirable that students gain information seeking and research skills, but many distance students will simply go without or will undertake a minimum of reading if access to required items is in any way difficult. In any case, as Mays (1986) and others have pointed out, (Behrens, 1991; Benson, 1984; Roe, 1981), the library plays little part in the studies of many undergraduates. Especially in first-year courses,

Deakin University Library

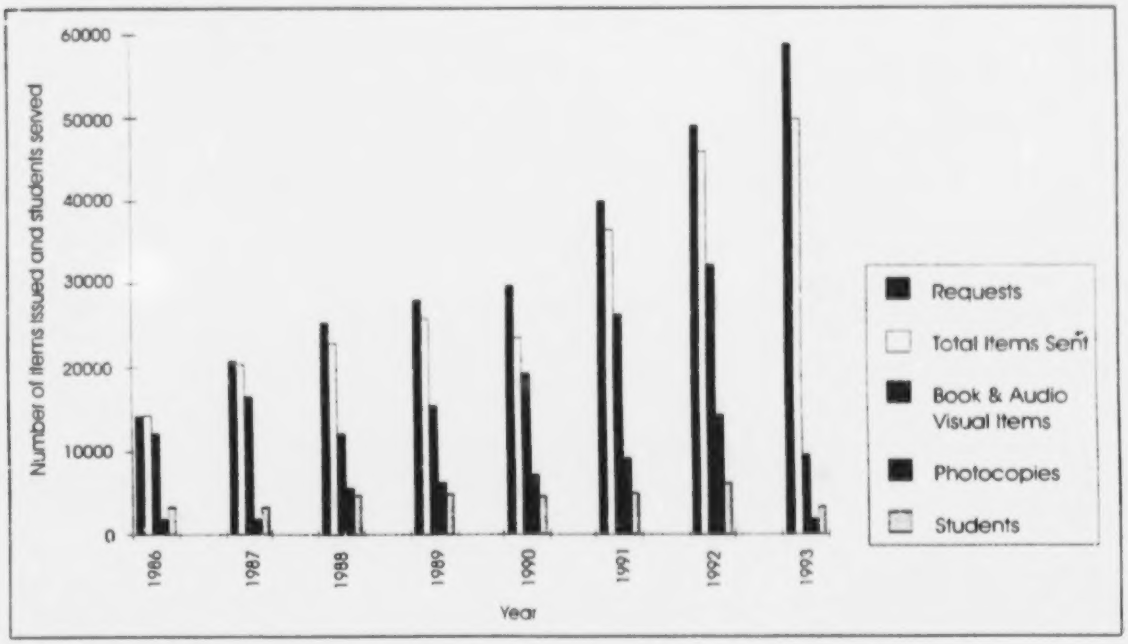


Table 2. Requests for books, audiovisual materials and photocopies from distance learners, 1986-1993

providing additional readings as readers is simply being realistic and may encourage at least some students to read more widely. Experience has shown that rather than stultifying students' desire to read further and carry out their own independent research, the opposite may actually occur.

In a report of a survey of student needs for reference material, the sources they use and the effects of the external system within which they study, Winter and Cameron (1983) found that *the provision of books of readings as well as study guides did not reduce students' use of libraries. Although slightly more students who receive readers, than those who do not, found that they did not need to use additional reference material, a large majority of those who receive readers use almost every other source of library material or information more than students who did not get readers. They had greater expectations of academic success and of progress to further study, and express greater confidence in their ability to use libraries efficiently.*

It is interesting to note that Deakin University, where the provision of readers is integral to the distance education programme of the University, has the busiest library delivery service in Australia. In 1993 over 55,000 books, audiovisual items and journal articles were sent to 6,750 Geelong-enrolled students. This indicates quite clearly that the provision of readers does not eliminate the demand for further reading and research in an environment where this is fostered. Table 2 shows trends in borrowing by Deakin distance students from Geelong since 1986; far from levelling off, the demand is rising each year.

It must be acknowledged, however, that many distance students do not make extensive use of their library, despite the fact that the library may offer a 24-hour turnaround service for materials by courier with prepaid return courier costs. Winter and Cameron (1993) showed that only about 40% of Australian students made use of their institution's delivery service. Cavanagh and Tucker (1993) confirm that this is also the case at Deakin University.

Set textbooks and recommended reading

Where a textbook is prescribed as central reading for a course, we believe that it is not appropriate for libraries to be expected to provide multiple copies. If all students are expected to read a particular item, then all students should have their own copies.

Scarce resources are better spent on purchasing materials which will increase the depth and breadth of the collection rather than purchasing large numbers of multiple copies, the majority of which will eventually become outdated or superseded and require extensive weeding. In the long run, students are better served by having access through their institution's library to a wider range of materials to support their independent study and extended reading.

It may be difficult for students in some developing countries to purchase their own textbooks, but wherever it is financially possible it should be encouraged. The situation is somewhat different with recommended readings. These are usually books but may also be journal articles or extracts that the lecturer expects the student to read as part of the course of study. Such material should form part of readers. However it is not reasonable to expect students to purchase recommended books – the library should provide them. Obviously the budget available will determine how many copies can be purchased. Purchasing policy should relate to the number of off-campus students, the number of books on the reading lists, and the type of course, that is, whether it requires extensive reading or not. Shillinglaw (1992) reports that at the University of South Africa, which has over 130,000 distance students, in exceptional cases purchases of over 1,000 copies of a single title have been made because of large enrollments in very popular courses! At Deakin, our Library Collection Development Policy includes Guidelines for Ordering Recommended Reading Materials which is use in conjunction with the experience of the Off-Campus Librarian to decide on final numbers (see Table 3). Thus we would order up to these numbers in popular humanities, social sciences and nursing courses but would reduce them for many science, engineering, computing and management courses where experience shows that library demand and usage is relatively low.

Deakin University Library

Guidelines for Ordering Recommended Reading Material

The guideline is one copy for 10 off-campus students (1 for 20 on-campus students) per campus for recommended reading. This rule is modified by the length of the reading list and experience. Multiple copies are ordered of books variously listed in course reading lists as are recommended reading, further reading or annotated bibliography. They are all referred to as recommended reading below.

In addition, some titles are recommended for several units and are consequently heavily used. In this case the number of multiples ordered may exceed the guidelines for one unit, because the needs of several units are being covered.

Approximate guidelines for ordering are:

For 100 off-campus students:	For 100 on-campus students
a. 2 recommended books only order 10 copies of each	a. 2 recommended books only order 5 copies of each
b. 10 recommended books order 5 copies of each	b. 10 recommended books order 3 copies of each
c. 20 recommended books order 3 copies of each	c. 20 recommended books order 2 copies of each
d. 50 recommended books order 1–2 of each	d. 50 recommended books order 1 copy of each

One copy only is ordered of titles cited at the end of chapters in study guides.

Table 3. Collection development guidelines
From: Deakin University Library Collection Development Policy, 1994

Subject requests

Despite being provided with comprehensive study guides and readers, students may find that on occasion they need additional information to complete assignments. They may need statistics or more up-to-date material than is available in their study guide and reader, or they may simply require additional background information. Honours and postgraduate students beginning a research project may need one or more computer searches of the literature. In all these cases, distance education library staff need to decide how best to handle such requests, which may well require specialist subject knowledge. Consequently, depending on the number and expertise of the staff available it may be most efficient for subject requests to be handled by subject specialists or reference librarians. As the time involved can be up to one hour per request, it is important that dealing with subject requests for distance students be included as part of the job description for reference librarians and that there be close liaison between reference and distance library staff.

Borrowing from other libraries

Even though a library may be endeavouring to meet its obligation to its distance students by providing an efficient library service, some students may still find it more convenient to use other libraries. The home library should then endeavour to arrange reciprocal borrowing rights for its students either by negotiating directly with the libraries of other institutions or by providing letters of introduction for its students. The ideal case would be if all institutions in a country were prepared to accept a common or national student identification card, a concept which Deakin University has long supported in Australia (Crocker, Cameron and Farish, 1987). At present, the Deakin Library External Services Section compiles an annual list of borrowing privileges offered by academic libraries throughout Australia to visiting distance students. The list is widely distributed and also sent to Deakin's distance students as part of their*Library Guide*. In this way, while still making available a full library service to our students, we are encouraging them to use libraries in person where possible.

SUMMARY

While many institutions throughout the world which are teaching distance students attempt to provide a library service, students in developing countries are often hampered by the unavailability of such basics as electricity in their homes, by poor telecommunications and postal services and by inadequately funded and limited library services. Nevertheless, it remains the responsibility of the home institution to provide, as far as it can, for the library needs of its students.

To do this successfully requires a partnership between students, lecturers and the library. Students need encouragement to use libraries and this can be provided by the lecturer in the form of challenging assignments, a stated expectation that students will read beyond the set material and the recognition (in the form of grades or marks obtained) that the student has done additional work. The library plays its part by widely advertising the services available to students and by offering reader education classes whenever the opportunity arises. A two-way collaboration between lecturers or staff preparing distance course material and the library can help to ensure that the library staff are aware of new units and can order material in time to meet subsequent demand.

The general requirements for a library service for distance learners are discussed in guidelines produced by several national library bodies. Many questions need to be decided before an external library service is set up and a number of these are listed as examples. Certainly the library needs to be clear on what it should provide and what should be supplied as part of the course package. We believe that articles and excerpts from books which students are expected to read should be collected together as a reader and provided to all students as part of their course material. It is costly and inefficient for the library to make photocopies repeatedly for a group of students. The provision of readers has other benefits as well – it ensures that students have guaranteed access to important material and studies have shown that such students may be stimulated to read more widely. Finally we believe that the students should be expected to purchase their own copies of set textbooks but the library should hold and supply multiple copies of recommended books. The library should also assist the student with requests for information and encourage them to use libraries in person by negotiating or arranging borrowing rights at other libraries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Behrens, S. J. (1993). "Obstacles to user education for off campus students: lecturers' attitudes to library skills." In C. Jacob (comp.) *The 6th Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Kansas City, Missouri*. Mount Pleasant, Michigan: Central Michigan University.

— (1991). "Library literacy and undergraduate students." *South African Journal of Higher Education 5*,(1) 124-128.

Benson, S. H. (1984). "The library's status in undergraduate instruction: 'far from the heart of things'." In S.C. Dodson and G. L. Menges (eds.). *Academic libraries: myths and realities*. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries.

Branscomb, H. (1940). *Teaching with books: a study of college libraries*. Chicago: Association of American Libraries. (Cited by Mays (1986)).

Canadian Library Association (1993). *Guidelines for library support for distance learning in Canada*. Ottawa: Canadian Library Association.

Carty, J. (1991). *Library services for distance education students: adequacy of provision: the Open University, Australia and Canada*. Aberystwyth: University College of Wales, M. Lib. Thesis.

Cavanagh, A. K. (1994). "Open learning students and libraries." *Australian Academic and Research Libraries 25*, (2) 95-105.

Cavanagh, A. K. and J. Tucker (1993). "Costing of off-campus library services." In C. Jacob (comp.) *6th Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Kansas City, Missouri*. Mount Pleasant, Michigan: Central Michigan University.

Crocker, C. (ed.) (1982). *Guidelines for library services to external students*. Ultimo, N.S.W.: Library Association of Australia.

Crocker, C., M. Cameron and S. Farish (1987). *A national library card for external students? An investigation into a possible system of borrowing privileges for all external students at all tertiary libraries*. Geelong: Deakin University.

Mays, T. (1986). "Do undergraduates need their libraries? A study of users and non-users at Deakin University." *Australian Academic and Research Libraries 17*, (1) 51- 62.

Pickett, M. J. (ed.) (1990). "ACRL guidelines for extended campus library services." *College and Research Libraries News 52*,(4) 353-355.

Roe, E. (1981). "Academics, librarians, resource management and resource use: a preliminary study." *British Library Research and Development Report* No. 5749 [Boston Spa: British Library].

Shillinglaw, N. (1992). "Document supply and distance education library service."*Interlending and Document Supply 20,* (4) 143- 51.

Watson, E. (1993). "Library services to distance learners in Third World countries: barriers to service." In C. Jacob (comp.) *6th Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Kansas City, Missouri*. Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University.

—— (1992). *Library services to distance learners: a report*. Vancouver: Commonwealth of Learning.

Winter, A. and M. Cameron (1983). *External students and their libraries*. Geelong: Deakin University Library.

Appendix

Reprinted with permission from

GUIDELINES FOR LIBRARY SERVICES TO EXTERNAL STUDENTS.
Ultimo, N.S.W.: Library Association of Australia, 1982. Ed. Christine Crocker.

STAFF

1 Library services to external students should be the responsibility of professional library staff at an appropriately senior level; the university or college librarian should be ultimately responsible for the service.

2 An adequate number of staff, at appropriate levels, should be engaged to provide the services indicated (see pages 16–27) to all external students.

3 Professional and non-professional staff time should be available on a flexible basis to meet peak demands, and to provide for 24-hour turnaround on all requests.

4 The professional librarian responsible for the services offered to external students should:
- respond sympathetically to the special needs of external students
- understand the objectives of the distance education programme
- participate in any planning activities associated with the offering of external studies.

Does the library take into account the proportion of external students enrolled when allocating professional staff time to this part of its library service?

Does the professional staff member responsible for services to external students:

- participate in the institution's official forums which examine and evaluate education matters
- advise on the resource implications of curriculum planning, innovation and evaluation
- liaise with academic staff in resource selection and creation
- liaise with administrators of external studies and other appropriate university or college administrative personnel
- participate in the library's budgeting and policy-making process actively promote the resources of the library through user education programmes, library guides, etc.
- regularly visit study centres where these are incorporated into the library service offered
- regularly evaluate the services offered
- participate in any course-writing teams preparing external courses?

Is sufficient professional staff time available for:

- answering reference questions
- fulfilling non-specific requests
- compiling bibliographies
- preparing selective or complete annotated lists of material from which students may choose?

Is sufficient non-professional staff time available for prompt:
- fulfillment of specific requests
- processing of loans
- packaging of parcels
- photocopying
- recording of statistics
- shelving
- attention to normal clerical duties
- typing?

Do the academic staff and the library staff involved in services to external students have access to specialist staff of the total library system, for additional help (e.g., online searching, inter-library loans), as required?

ACCESS

1 The institution has a responsibility to ensure the provision of high quality library services to all external students enrolled.

2 In support of its own library service, the library should take the initiative in negotiating or contracting access with other appropriate libraries.

3 The institution should formulate policies that actively encourage the development of cooperative activities to enhance the opportunities of access for all external students.

4 The institution should ensure that external students are not prevented by lack of equipment and related services from using non-book materials.

Are all library resources and services offered to on-campus students equally available to external students?

Does the library have a policy for external students of:
- the entire library resources available on request
- accepting information requests by telephone
- granting loan extensions by telephone
- supplying subject-oriented assistance
- supplying reference information as requested
- supplying bibliographies as requested?

If the institution holds compulsory or voluntary weekend or vacation schools on campus, are the facilities of the library system available to external students in the same manner that they are available to on-campus students during the semester?

Where lack of appropriate audiovisual equipment may prevent external students from using materials in some formats, does the library lend the necessary equipment?

What policies for the decentralization of resources does the library have? Have the following possibilities been explored:

- depositing resources in local public libraries
- maintaining collections in existing regional centres, e.g., education or teachers' centres, high schoools, professional offices
- negotiating for reciprocal access with other tertiary institutions
- contracting with regional libraries for materials supply to and access for external students
- maintaining collections and services in regional study centres, either alone or in co-operation with other institutions?

Where shared study centres as a part of the institutional model, does the library actively seek and support their cooperative development by:

- ensuring adequate staff are employed at the local centre, through financial cooperation from all institutions
- participating in the joint provision of a catalogue in the centre
- ensuring the development of a relevant collection in the centre
- preventing unnecessary duplication of resources
- providing audiovisual software and contributing to essential support equipment
- rationalising purchases of journals and a basic reference collection
- ensuring that the study centre libraries are administered by joint representation from all participating libraries?

Are geographical directories of available equipment and support services maintained, and provided as assistance to external students and academic staff? Are formal arrangements made for students to use these services?

Does the library conduct regular surveys of public libraries used by external students to assess and help with the demand placed on their resources and staff?

INITIATING THE FIRST STEPS: THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE LIBRARY SERVICES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN

Linda Claudia de Four

INTRODUCTION

The growing demand for education, especially at the tertiary level, causes educational institutions, such as the University of the West Indies, to react positively to these demands. Institutional response must include the articulation of long term goals, objectives and plans to meet these demands. Any expansion of educational opportunities must also take into account the utilisation of existing technology as well as the increasing trend of integrating information technologies in the educational process. Gilbert (1993) recommends that telecommunications is an appropriate medium to extend the provision of education. These technologies support new and innovative learning techniques and often create more cost-effective methods of teaching and learning. An extension of Gilbert's recommendation is to utilise telecommunications technologies for the delivery of library services to distance learners in the Caribbean. This is an exciting regional challenge for the many professions that would need to interact to achieve such an aim.

The wider Caribbean consists of numerous islands scattered over a distance of more than 2,500 miles. It includes the multi-island group of the Bahamas in the north to Trinidad and Tobago in the south. The continental territories of Belize, Guyana, Suriname and Cayenne are also a part of the Caribbean region. The population of the region is estimated to be over 30 million (1990), of which 5.6 million belong to the Commonwealth Caribbean. The term Commonwealth Caribbean is used to describe any Caribbean territory that has or had legal connections with Great Britain. Normally it includes the Bahamas, which despite its location in the Atlantic Ocean, has many connections with the islands to the south. These connections include funding the University of the West Indies. Bermuda in not normally considered to be a part of the Commonwealth Caribbean.

The proportion of Commonwealth Caribbean nationals who have received post-secondary education at the UWI is 0.1%. The current enrollment at the UWI is less than 10,000 students. However, it is anticipated that by the year 2000 A.D., there will be a roll of 18,500 students. Projections are that one in eight of these will be classified as a distance learners.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES (UWI)

The UWI was founded in 1948 at Mona, Jamaica as the University College of the West Indies. It was a constituent member of the University of London. Full university status as the University of the West Indies was achieved in 1962. The former Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA) in Trinidad became the Faculty of Agriculture in 1960. This marked the commencement of the UWI's second campus. The Barbados campus was opened in 1963 and it was relocated to it present site, at Cave Hill, in 1968.

Each of the three campuses has grown considerably since its inception both in terms of student and staff numbers as well as in the range of programmes that are available. Certification from the UWI is available at the undergraduate and postgraduate level in many disciplines. Programmes leading to undergraduate, postgraduate and professional diplomas and certificates are also available in a range of subjects.

As a regional institution, the UWI is financed by 14 separate Caribbean countries or states. To provide a university presence in the non-campus countries (NCCs) of the UWI there are Schools of Continuing Studies (SCS), which were formerly designated as Extramural Centres. The principal mandate of the SCS is to provide opportunities for continuing education of all kinds. The existence and location of the SCS rendered them ideal to play a pivotal role in the distance education activities of the UWI. The role of the UWI is to make university level education accessible and to provide training opportunities in areas of need in the region. Additionally, these learning opportunities should be at a cost which is affordable. One of the methodologies that can positively meet these requirements is distance education. For a fuller description of the UWI see Sherlock and Nettleford (1992).

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN – 2000 A.D.

It is generally argued that, in order to make education convergent with the needs of the information age, it must include the use of technologically driven inputs. Accordingly, in the UWI's *Overview Development Plan – 1990 – 2000 A.D.* (1989), the application of technology to education and learning is cited as one of the critical factors in the reform of regional tertiary level education.

An expansion of the existing plant to meet the demand for tertiary level education is beyond the financial capacity of the region. Thus, the face-to-face mode of teaching will not be able to satisfy the quest for tertiary level education of many Caribbean people. To meet the anticipated growth in requests for student places at the UWI alternative strategies for delivering education must be instituted. One response is for the UWI to expand its distance education programming. An improvement of the existing technological capabilities of the institution is another. Establishing, where necessary, as well as increasing and enhancing the existing computing facilities to support intra-, inter- and extra-institutional communications is yet another solution.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES DISTANCE TEACHING ENTERPRISE

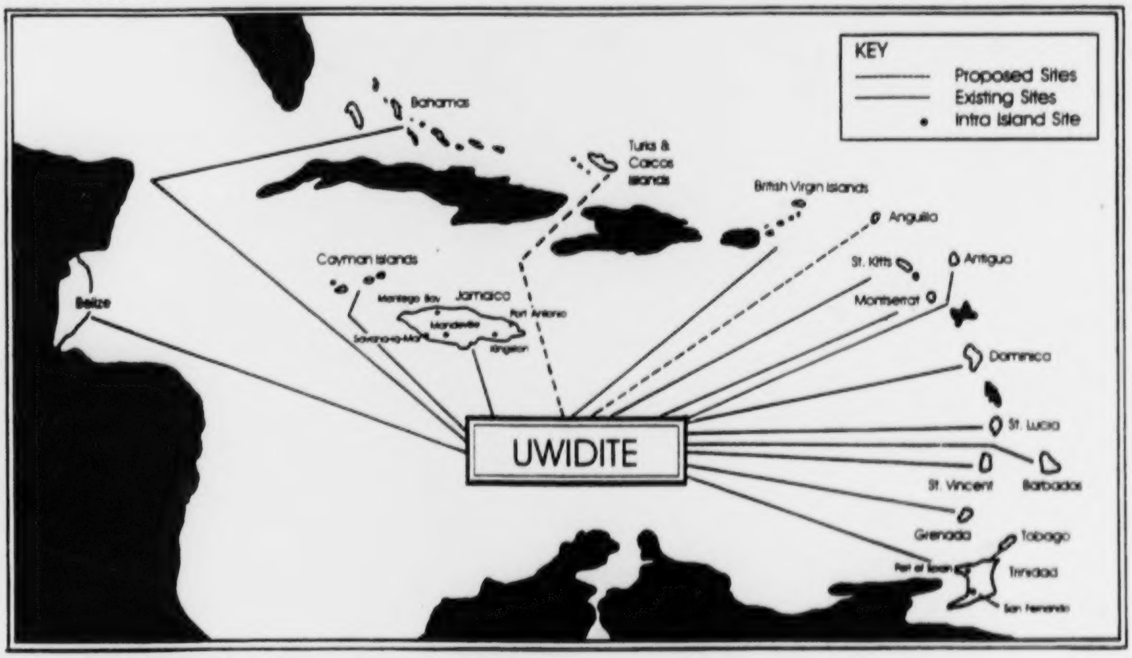
The University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Enterprise (UWIDITE) began as an experiment in 1983 through a loan of (US) $600,000 from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The USAID loan, disbursed over a five-year period, was to facilitate the establishment of an audio teleconferencing system for the UWI. The terms of the loan included the provision of space, equipment, training, technical assistance and communication charges. The areas used for teleconferencing were equipped with microphones, speakers, slow scan television sets, modems and a Darome convenor. Telewriters (electronic blackboards), videocassette players and computers were added to the system incrementally. The UWIDITE system uses a leased telephone line as its communicating device. The system, on a determination made by the telecommunications carriers, is bridged in St. Lucia. When the funds from USAID were exhausted, UWIDITE ceased to be an experiment and become an enterprise. UWIDITE is now an integral part of the UWI's modalities to deliver tertiary level education and has a number of infrastructural support services attached to it to effect its work.

The project office for UWIDITE is located on the Mona campus. This office coordinates many of the administrative activities for UWIDITE. All of the technical matters associated with the system are managed from the Mona office. Subject to certain conditions, non-UWI regional bodies may use the system for educational purposes. The existing technology in the Caribbean also allows UWIDITE to be hooked up with or into extra-regional telecommunication systems. This has been done with success on many occasions.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education is a method of instruction in which the students, teachers and the institutions of instruction are separated from each other by distance and time. Distance education in the Caribbean can therefore be intra-territorial, inter-territorial or extra-regional. In Jamaica, for example, first-year undergraduate courses are delivered locally to disparate geographical locations. In addition to Kingston where the Mona campus is located, UWIDITE courses are pursued by students in Mandeville, Montego Bay and Port Antonio. Savanna-la-Mar, a town in south western Jamaica became the newest site of the intra-Jamaica link in early 1995.

The Caribbean



Map 1: UWIDITE System

Distance education is a learner-centred process. The learning paradigm has shifted towards the student as an independent learner and a network citizen, rather than being tutor-centred and building-bound. The tutor, therefore, is no longer the main or only source of information. In distance education students must be prepared to assume a high degree of responsibility for their learning.

The role of intramural libraries is to meet the information needs of the campus community and sometimes those beyond. Distance learners have information needs as well. Because they cannot go to the library, the library must deploy approaches that will get information to students. For example, it is necessary to review the types of conduits used to transfer information between the source of the information and its users.

The physical handling of a printed information source is not the only way that information can be accessed. Technological means of storing, retrieving, dispatching and receiving information have gained considerable significance in the last two decades. Many students are already familiar with several types of audiovisual materials. Computers, as a means of supporting technology-driven information, are rapidly becoming more widespread in ownership. The overall lowering of prices and the development of domestic lines have made the acquisition of electronic and electrical equipment a reality for many. This is also true for developing countries.

The availability of technology in many homes and offices or distance education study centres places today's distance learners in an advantageous position to use technology in their learning endeavours.

DISTANCE EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

Renwick, Shale and Rao (1992) in a report on distance education at the UWI state that the institution is at a watershed in its distance education activities. It therefore has the opportunity to develop or revisit the policies and operating practices necessary for the effective management and further development of its distance education activities.

The determination to respond to the short-fall between the number of campus places available and the number of persons wishing university education has guided the UWI in a particular direction. The institution is persuaded that a dual-mode university offering both on- and off-campus programmes is the best approach. The essence of Renwick, Shale and Rao's report is that the responsibility of the academic content of the UWI's distance education programmes should reside with the university teachers who are responsible for on-campus teaching.

The on-campus libraries are strategically placed to be involved in both the on- and off-campus programmes of the UWI. The involvement of the library with on-campus courses and users is a given and this relationship is understood by all. The role of the library in distance programmes is not well defined. On the one hand librarians are only just beginning to have an understanding of distance learning and its implications for library services, while on the other hand distance educators and administrators are not fully persuaded that distance learners need to have access to information other than what distance tutors/educators distribute or bring to the students' attention. The perception that student support should include library services has not translated into the reality of distance education.

MODELS OF OFF-CAMPUS LIBRARY SERVICES

The delivery of information and materials in a timely manner is the primary concern of library administrators. Lessin (1991) identifies five possible models for providing library services to distance students. These are:

- the branch campus library;
- the trunk delivery system;
- the use of local libraries;
- the use of the on-campus library for all users, both on- and off-campus; and/or
- a mix of the above.

Fee-based services are a recent development. This occurs when the distance teaching institution pays a local library to provide services to its students. The fee is usually calculated on a per capita basis.

The libraries of the three main campuses of the UWI are well established. On-campus users have access to good collections of books, journals and other formats which are used to store and present information. Access to international online databases (at a cost) is also available at each campus. Additionally, the computer and telecommunications systems at the campuses of the UWI are being upgraded within each campus to allow intra- and inter-campus links. Therefore, there is a real possibility of using electronic means for networking and document delivery activities. The next step is to connect the SCS to the UWI's electronic network.

One of the important things that must be borne in mind is that none of the countries in the region is at the same stage of technological development. For example, services provided by the Internet are currently being introduced across the region on an incremental basis. Hence, the debate on the use of "appropriate technology" is relevant.

LIBRARY SERVICES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS

In order to ensure that its distance education programmes are accorded recognition, it is not only desirable but necessary that the UWI provides the same quality of education to its on-campus and off-campus students. Access to quality library services is required for all campus-based programmes. By extension, therefore, a counterpart service ought to be available for UWI distance students. Kascus and Aguilar (1988) list the following as basic requirements for distance library services:

- access to adequate facilities;
- adequate funds;
- core collections;
- professional library staff;
- reserve reading collections; and
- supplementary materials.

In the Caribbean context, Watson (1992) states that the essential student support services are:

- access to print and non-print materials to support bibliographic needs;
- consultation services;
- inter-library loans;
- photocopying services;
- the production of library and literature guides;
- prompt document delivery; and
- reference services.

TECHNOLOGY IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The Commonwealth Caribbean cannot avoid the impact and application of technology on education, particularly at the tertiary level. Technology has moved the world away from the industrial epoch and placed it squarely in the information age. Education for social and economic transformation and the development of human resources is enshrined in the constitutions of all the nation states in the Caribbean. In order to avoid economic stagnation and a lowering of the existing standards of living, regional governments are committed to becoming integral members of the global telecommunications highway.

A regulatory body – The Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) – was established in 1989 by CARICOM (the Caribbean Community). CARICOM is a regional organisation which is headquartered in Georgetown, Guyana, and it is supported by the governments of the independent Commonwealth Caribbean countries. The mandate of the CTU is to put in place a strong regulatory framework and to supervise and co-ordinate all telecommunications services in the Caribbean. The work of the CTU should be beneficial to the UWI's activities in the use of telecommunications for education.

Enabling technologies for distance education in the Caribbean

Communication carriers in the Caribbean are committed to a telecommunications infrastructure which would support a rapid, reliable and effective telecommunications capability within the region and between the region and the rest of the world.

At present, there are more than eight individual commercial telecommunication companies which provide telecommunication services in the Caribbean. Achieving technological compatibility between carriers is a need. The standardisation of regulations, services and charges is also required. At this point while structural networking is possible, administratively it is improbable.

One only needs to examine the telephone distribution throughout the Caribbean to realise that the potential and the capability for using telecommunications as a medium to deliver library services exists. It is not without significance that the Eastern Caribbean was the first region in the world to enjoy a fully digitalised telecommunications network. The Digital Eastern Caribbean Microwave System (DEMS) is the largest multinational chain of microwave links in the world. In 1994, fibre optic cables were used to upgrade the system.

A scrutiny of the telecommunications systems in some of the islands indicates the widespread availability in the region. Dominica, with a population of 71,794 persons (1991), has a capacity for 14,000 exchange lines. Tortola has a 100% digital switching system. Many of the islands have full International Direct Dialling systems (IDD), facsimile, data and telex services, International Database Access (IDAS) and a band-width flexible leased service.

Statistics on radio and television collated by Brown and Sanatan (1987) reveal that in Trinidad and Tobago, there were 25 radio sets per 100 population. In the Bahamas there were 47 sets per 100 population and in Barbados 54 sets per 100 population. In the Eastern Caribbean, radio listenership is recorded as being higher than for the rest of the Commonwealth Caribbean.

Their examination of the availability of television sets revealed that the ratio per 100 population is not as high as for radios. In Trinidad and Tobago, there were 9 television sets and in Barbados 19 television sets per 100 population. Figures for the Bahamas and Jamaica indicate that there were between 27,000 – 30,000 and 387,000 individual television sets in each of these countries.

The data on the availability of technology suggests that Caribbean distance learners would have little difficulty to have access to radio, television and telephone services.

Technological possibilities

Essentially "appropriate technology", in this context, calls for the adoption of information technologies that are appropriate for the political, economic and social variables present in the Third World country. As there are vast differences at many levels and in many areas between, and even within, individual Caribbean states the reality of each situation must be appreciated.

Technologies appropriate for distance learning are:

- cable;
- delivery through low power television;
- fibre optics;
- microcomputers networked through regular telephone lines and/or microwave telephone signals;
- satellite;
- slow scan television; and
- VSATs – Very Small Aperture Terminals.

The application of global telecommunications networks for information services

The use of networked systems with packet switching and distributed databases for information purposes is already a world-wide phenomenon. The libraries of the UWI already participate in inter-library links that are computer based networks, e.g., OCLC and DIALOG. The audioconferencing ability of UWIDITE demonstrates that networking, however simple the technology, is of benefit to the region. The proposed expansion and upgrading of UWIDITE can only be viewed as a step in the right direction.

There are other networks on the international scene which may be of value to the UWI in its thrust towards the use of telecommunications for education. Of particular interest would be the Hawaii Interactive Television System (HITS) and the system used at the University of the South Pacific, which were specifically designed to meet the needs of these regions. Both systems provide distance education services and programmes for archipelagoes like the Caribbean.

The Iridium network (Bertiger, 1994) is designed to be a global telecommunications network that is capable of all of the advanced features of a fibre optic network. It provides for advanced telecommunications features in even the smallest or most remote of sites. Its architecture supports intra-village, inter-village, inter-country, inter-regional and international communications at affordable prices. Its costs are within the reach of most Third World countries.

The use of Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) technology has also been proposed for developing countries. It permits real-time sharing of messages, transactions, conversation and images to support collaborative work among geographically dispersed locations. This technology is already in use in the banking sector in the Caribbean. Its deployment to support educational activities is a factor of cost rather than technological impossibility. Many of these technological options are available and in place either singly or jointly in all of the islands of the Caribbean. Yet the delivery of information in an efficient and timely process encounters barriers.

Thus there are many options that can be used to support technology-based information sources and systems in the Caribbean. The will to do so rests with the educational institution, the regional governments, the telecommunication companies and others. Agitation by librarians alone will not accomplish the task, but Caribbean librarians can and must be the guiding forces behind this development.

BARRIERS TO THE DELIVERY OF LIBRARY SERVICES TO CARIBBEAN DISTANCE LEARNERS

The rapid growth and permutative changes in telecommunications technology and the accompanying obsolescence of existing equipment place technology in a spiral which has a momentum with which Third World countries are hard pressed to keep pace.

While the technological capability/capacity to cost ratio is decreasing, the actual costs are rising or are at least in a steady-state equilibrium. Many Third World countries cannot meet the most basic social needs of their populations, consequently expenditure for technological purposes is affected.

Financial assistance from regional and international funding agencies is dwindling and the use of funds from these sources to purchase basic (to the developed world) equipment is being screened more rigorously. These constitute barriers of one kind.

Another impediment is the knowledge gap that exists between distance education administrators and information professionals. Conflicts between telecommunication technocrats who want to remain*au courant* with the latest technological development and administrators abound. Administrators are often unable to appreciate the developments in technology and how these impact on services, thus they are often unable to appreciate the necessity for technologists to remain in a state-of-the-art status. Administrators are also frequently pressed to find money for competing demands at the same time and, therefore, they are often required to make hard decisions.

Some change of attitude is necessary on the part of some librarians towards technology. Old approaches and methods are not always appropriate for distance services; in addition changes in all spheres of life have an impact on professional activities and practices. Librarians have traditionally been marginalised. Because of reluctance and resistance to change, the profession has lost considerable ground to "information science and information technologists". Librarians have to work assiduously to change their status in their parent institution. Institutional relationships between librarians and their employing institution, between librarians and other professionals in the same institution need to be reshaped. The responsibility of gaining a new image and an enhanced status lies within the profession. The charge is theirs and theirs alone.

Strategies to overcome technological ignorance and discomfort must be pursued. Librarians will have to be able to demonstrate their knowledge of, and facility with, the technology of information at levels that surpass the level of knowledge of users. They must also be able to feel comfortable in any interactive situation between themselves and those who provide the technological services. Acquiring a high comfort level with technology will enable librarians to make the appropriate representation for technology-driven information services to be placed in a strategic position on the agenda of their parent institution.

Librarians therefore are charged with the responsibility of taking all the steps that are necessary to delink their profession from its marginalised position. This requires planned, concerted and sustained efforts at many levels with all of the library's interest groups – whether they are beneficiaries or providers.

According to Watson (1992), the main factor which has mitigated against the development of library services to distance learners in the Caribbean is the lack of an institutional philosophy to provide library and information services to distance learners. Watson also cites, as a critical barrier, the lack of awareness on the part of library and information professionals about distance education generally. The lack of empathy towards the needs of distance learners on the part of library professionals was also cited by this writer as a barrier to the provision of library and information services. The adoption of an advocacy role for library services to distance learners will support the development of a heightening of professional consciousness on the library and information needs of distance learners.

Document delivery through traditional and in some instances non-traditional means are fraught with many problems and are well documented (Watson, 1993; Kascus and Aguilar, 1988; MacDougall, Wheelhouse and Wilson 1989). In the Caribbean the cost of sending faxes, the rates charged for courier services and other commercial document delivery systems places the use of these services outside the financial abilities of many persons in the region. Those who need these services the most are often those who can least afford to meet these costs.

In the Third World the national and international postal service is also costly and often unreliable. In remote villages there may not be any electricity, home generators or telephones. The use of technology is dependent on the availability of these services.

Internal transportation may be irregular and not immediately accessible for a number of reasons . Hence movement between a remote village and a university centre may be quite difficult. The cost of regional travel within the Caribbean is quite high. It is not unusual for example to be able to travel between New York and Trinidad and Tobago for a cheaper fare than between Trinidad and Tobago and either Kingston, Jamaica or Nassau in the Bahamas.

Hence the movement of people or materials between and within many Third World countries encounter many obstacles, the solution of which is often outside the competence of either the educational authorities, the governments or individuals.

At the other end of the spectrum of computer-based services is the challenge to the UWI's monopoly and right to be the sole provider of information to academics and students. Electronic educational technologies have already taken off in the Caribbean but they are not yet available at a cost which a significant percentage of the population can afford. While computer technology is currently available to only an elite group the time may well come when this is no longer the case. This will bring into question the role and place of academic libraries as we now know them in the new education environment.

OFF-CAMPUS LIBRARIANS AND TECHNOLOGY

The off-campus librarian

An off-campus or distance services librarian is a library professional who is charged with the responsibility of providing library services to distance learners. The off-campus librarian should have a basic understanding of distance education and what situations this mode of learning occasions for the student. The establishment of a post for off-campus services contributes to the timely delivery of materials that are up-to-date and reliable. Such a post also contributes to supportive administrative procedures and arrangements for distance library services.

Empathy with the distance learners concerning their needs and a willingness to take all the steps necessary to overcome the tyranny of distance are required qualities. In the Caribbean context, off-campus librarians must see their role as providing an essential social and information service. Client satisfaction must be the overriding concern.

For the purposes of this article, ideally, the distance services librarian would be located on a campus with responsibility for off-campus services. This arrangement would afford continuous and intimate contact with distance learners, distance tutors, distance administrators and professional colleagues involved in course development and production. A campus-based distance librarian would have access to subject specialists whose skills would enhance the quality of the distance services available.

Distance services librarians who operate from campuses are also uniquely placed to influence the course of curriculum development at critical stages. They are also able to guide course planners and developers towards useful and current materials for their courses. Placement on a campus does not affect the ability of distance services librarians to act as counsellors to off-campus library users.

The off-campus librarian can offer all or some of the following services:

- reference and information services;
- bibliographic instruction;
- preparation of specialised bibliographies;
- compilation and distribution of information packets;
- faculty orientation to available library services;
- public relations;
- a range of user support services;
- marketing;
- advertising; and the
- evaluation of library services.

The use of technology by off-campus librarians in the Caribbean

The suggestion to centre the delivery of library services to distance learners in the Commonwealth Caribbean from the university centres in the NCCs of the UWI commends itself at many levels. User services at the remote sites, supported by centralised purchasing and processing of materials from one or more of the campus libraries would allow for services to be provided at the point of need while at the same time fostering economies in operational costs. Computers with modems, fax machines, photocopying machines and scanners located at the NCC SCSs would support communications, document delivery and other user services. Telecommunicating networks are either already in place or in the process of being installed. Materials delivery through electronic conduits becomes a possibility if these networks are used.

A toll-free inter-UWI service would immediately put all the library holdings of the UWI literally at the end of the line for all of its distance learners. This development would mean that in some respects the distance learner would be better placed than a campus student because such a system would permit distance students to draw on the rich pool of professional resources across the UWI library system, while their campus colleagues would, at this time, have direct access only to the staff on their campus.

The existing teleconference system could be used, not only for teaching, but also for bibliographic instruction and other information contacts between local tutors and distance learners at all of the UWIDITE sites. The off-campus librarian would have responsibility to coordinate these activities.

The use of on-line Caribbean information services to support regional education

Several online information services managed by information specialists are already available in the Caribbean. Some examples are Caribbean Online, based in Barbados and UNECLAC/Ambionet based in Trinidad. The number of services of this type will proliferate in the future. While information is a right, more and more it is being perceived also as a commodity with a marketable value. The Caribbean is the richest depository of information on the Caribbean and it behooves all the constituent interests to harness this "raw material" and package it in such a way that it is used for the best interests of the region developmentally and economically.

The Internet is available in the region, albeit on a limited scale at this time. The potential widespread use of this system has ramifications of major proportions for Caribbean education, business, health, personal communications – in fact every facet of our lives.

As the Caribbean slowly becomes a participant in the global communications highway traditional barriers to technological advancement in every sphere are gradually disappearing.

CONCLUSION

The UWI is competing with other providers of tertiary level education for Caribbean people. In recent times, there has been a proliferation of degree-granting institutions, some of dubious credibility, which have been marketing their products in the Caribbean in direct competition with the UWI. If the UWI cannot provide the number of student places demanded, these institutions will take root and possibly bring into question the very viability of the UWI.

If the UWI is to maintain its position of being an institution of academic excellence and at the same time provide the number of student places demanded, the availability of distance education programmes of quality is an indispensable condition.

Library support is an integral part of quality education. The role of library support in distance education systems is of equal stature. It is absolutely vital, therefore, that in the new distance education dispensation at the UWI, library services are given their rightful position.

Telecommunications can remove geographical barriers. However, telecommunications, education and information technology must be placed high on political and academic agendas with converging goals. This is the only way that information services that are technologically dependent will be used to support education. Educators will gain access to technology only if they work cooperatively, aggregate their needs, share technical expertise, maximise their purchasing power and deploy their political clout in a positive way to benefit the present and future inhabitants of the region (Gilbert, 1993).

If Caribbean educators and telecommunications providers hope to unlock the full potential of applying telecommunications to enhance educational activities, they must accord librarians a higher status and recognise that librarians are an integral link in the education/information chain.

Librarians need to become more visible. They need to exhibit more dynamism, be more responsive to their clients' needs and to become more involved at many levels in the activities of their institution. They need to participate not only in their professional *fora* but also the working environments of the other professions with which they have to interact to provide services for and to their clients. National, regional and international professional links must be forged. Librarians need to become participants in, and informants of, the development of policy issues in all sectors which use information – not the least of which is education. Librarians must articulate their need to provide quality information services. Librarians must also demonstrate the value of their skills publicly and continuously. Their involvement in policy formation which affects their *raison d'être* must be a continuous process. Librarians must raise the level of awareness that politicians and administrators have of the role that libraries play. Associated with this must be ongoing statements on the importance that quality information services have in education – not the least of which is the tertiary sector. The pivotal role that information occupies in tertiary level education must not be allowed to go unnoticed, underestimated or unsupported. Librarians must become advocates for the use of telecommunications in order to provide efficient and effective library services to distance learners. Librarians must develop the technical competencies needed to participate on equal footing with others in all sectors of the policy-making process in the region.

Distance education as a modality to provide tertiary level education in the Caribbean is on the rise. The UWI library system is in a strategic position to guide the development of library services across the region, particularly as it applies to the application of telecommunications to regional information services. A regional library electronic network with its principal node at the UWI is not beyond the realm of possibility. The status of regional information systems in the 21st century is, to some extent, dependent on the development of the information system of the UWI. The UWI library system and in particular its managers, have a task of supreme importance ahead of them. The human resources capable of accomplishing this task are at their disposal. The final outcome will be determined by their action or inaction. The torch of development and progress in providing equitable library services for the distance learners of the UWI is theirs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brazillion, R.J. and C. Brown (1992). "Technology and library user automation and outreach: library services to off-campus students." *Journal of Distance Education 7,* (2) 67-75.

Bertiger, B.R. (1994). "The global communications highway." In James G. Savage and Dan J. Wedemeyer, (eds.) *Proceedings of the Pacific Telecommunications Council 16th Annual Conference.* Honolulu: Pacific Telecommunications Council.

Brown, A. and R. Sanatan (1987). *Talking with whom: a report on the state of the media in the Caribbean.* Mona, Jamaica: The University of the West Indies, CARIMAC.

Caribbean Telecommunications Union (1995). *Introduction to the Caribbean Telecommunications Union.* Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago: CTU Secretariat.

Gilbert, J.A. (1993). *Telecommunications in support of education: an agenda for telecommunications companies and educators.* Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

Kascus M. and W. Aguilar (1988). "Providing library support to off-campus programs." *College and Research Libraries 49,* (1) 29-37.

Lalor, G.C. (1988). *Report of the Caribbean Regional Communications Services Study.* Mona, Jamaica: The University of the West Indies.

Lalor, G.C. and C. Marrett (1986). *Report on The University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Experiment.* Mona, Jamaica: The University of the West Indies.

Lessin, B.M. (1991). "Library models for the delivery of support services to off-campus academic programs." *Library Trends 39,* (4) 405-423.

MacDougall, A.F., H. Wheelhouse and J.M. Wilson (1989). "Academic library cooperation and document supply." *Journal of Librarianship 21,* (3) 86-99.

Renwick, W., D. Shale and C. Rao (1992). *Distance education at the University of the West Indies. Report of an appraisal carried out on behalf of The Commonwealth of Learning.* Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

Sherlock, P. and R. Nettleford (1990). *The University of the West Indies: a Caribbean response to the challenge of change.* London: Macmillan Caribbean.

Slade, A.L. (1991). "Library support for off-campus and distance education programmes in Canada: an overview." *Library Trends 39,* (4) 454-478.

The University of the West Indies (1989). *Overview development plan, 1990–2000, A.D.* Mona, Jamaica: The University of the West Indies.

Watson, E.F. (1993). "Library services to distance learners in Third World countries: barriers to service." C. Jacob (comp.) *6th Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Kansas City, Missouri.* Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University.

— (1992). *Library services to distance learners: a report.* Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

World Bank (1993). *Caribbean region: access, quality and efficiency in education.* Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

RENDERING EQUITABLE LIBRARY SERVICES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS IN INDIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Neela Jagannathan

INTRODUCTION

The national development of a vast, multi-lingual and multi-cultural country like India poses tremendous challenges to its planners and administrators. Education, a principal vehicle for national development has, since independence, been a major concern to the Indian government. A particular need is to provide equitable access to higher education to all those who wish to study at that level. In order to assist the government with its plans and programmes to develop education, various commissions and committees have been appointed to make recommendations for the reorganisation of the education system of the country.

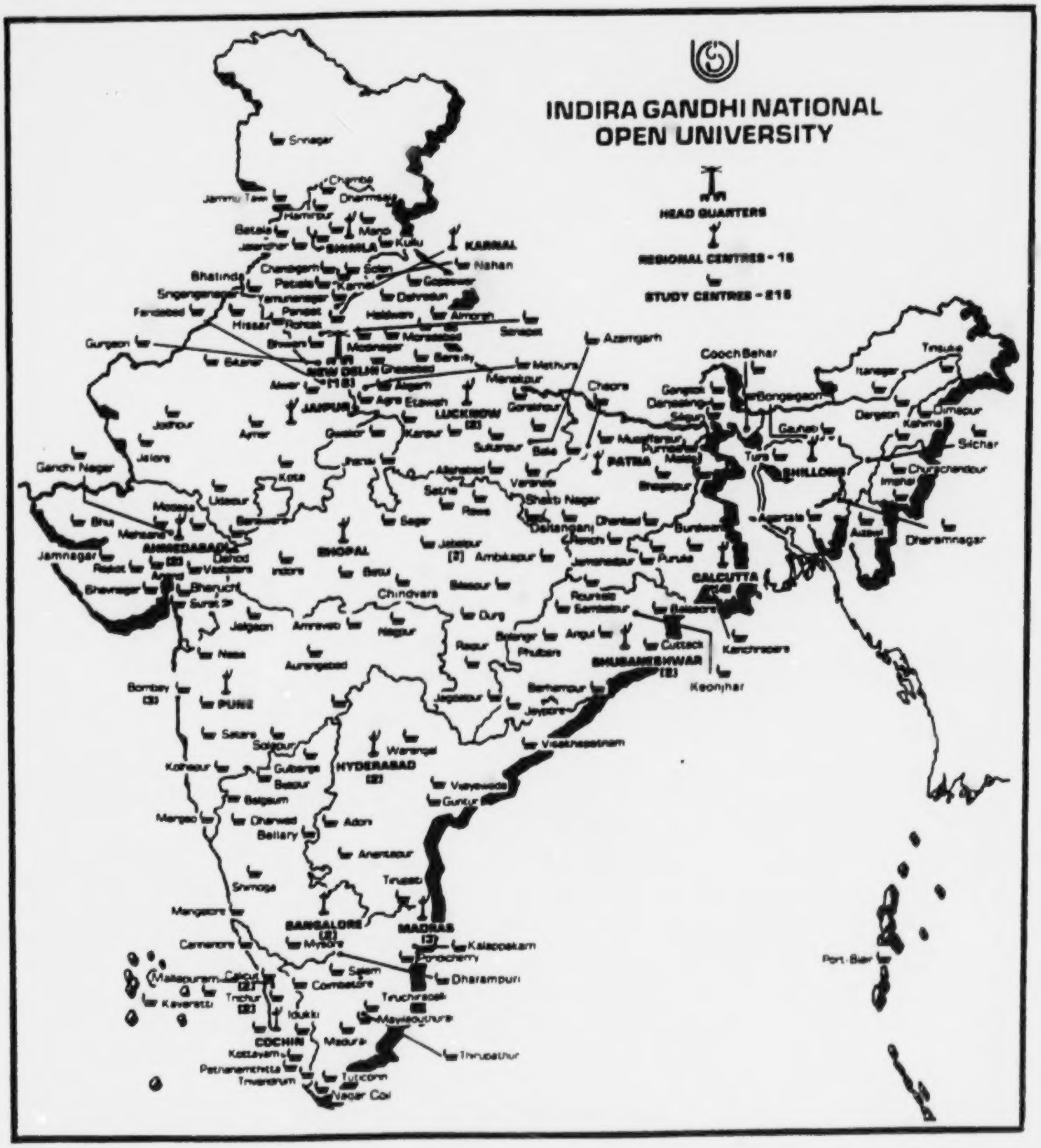
Strongly recommended by a number of the governmental bodies that looked at education was the use of distance education as a means of responding to the high demand for education in India. Distance education appealed for number of reasons. Distance education has developed from simple correspondence courses to modular, multi-media packages. In addition distance education could:

- rapidly supply places for the expanding number of persons seeking access to higher education;
- compensate for the inability of existing conventional academic institutions to provide places for all those who wished to study at the tertiary level;
- reduce the pressure on the Government to establish additional conventional universities to satisfy the number of persons who were seeking entry to institutions of higher learning; and
- provide training in all fields and at all levels without causing major disruptions to the domestic and economic lives of students.

GROWTH OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN INDIA

One noticeable development of the 1960s and 1970s was the growth in the number of educational institutions and universities in India. In spite of this they were not able to satisfy the demand for higher education. The yearly graduates from the school system as well as persons who were already in the workforce created extreme pressure on the existing tertiary institutions. Under the aegis of the Ministry of Education a committee, chaired by Dr. D.S. Kothari, examined the feasibility of establishing correspondence courses. Based on the recommendations of this committee, correspondence courses were introduced as a pilot project at the University of Delhi in 1962. Today, out of about 190 conventional universities, more than 40 are dual-mode universities offering correspondence courses from undergraduate to postgraduate levels. Despite this growth, the demand for tertiary education was still not satisfied.

Against this background, the Andhra Pradesh Open University (APOU), renamed the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU) was established by an Act of the State Legislature in August 1982.
It proved to be a significant and unprecedented approach to reduce the pressure on gaining access to tertiary education in India.



Map 1: IGNOU centres

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The success of the BRAOU to provide undergraduate and professional courses for unprecedented numbers of students caused many state governments to take similar steps to establish open universities in their states. Since then, four more state open universities have been established. They are:

- Kota Open University, Rajasthan, 1987
- Yashvantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU), Maharashtra, 1989
- Nalanda Open Univeristy (NOU), Bihar, 1989
- Raja Bhoj Open University (RBOU), Madhya Pradesh, 1993.

States which currently do not have an open university view the establishment of such an institution as an important priority. Open universities in India have adopted a flexible approach to enrollment, age of entry, choice of courses, methods of instruction, attending examinations, self-pacing and the removal of time and place barriers, all within the context of providing a high-quality of education using a multi-media approach.

INDIRA GHANDI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY (IGNOU): AN OVERVIEW

IGNOU's responsibility is to provide distance education opportunities at the national level. This places IGNOU at the apex of open universities and distance teaching institutions in the country. IGNOU, located in New Delhi, was established by an Act of Parliament in 1985. The mandate of IGNOU gives it responsibility to improve the access of 850 million people to tertiary level education. A land area of approximately 3.3 million square kilometres, with a north-south span of approximately 3,220 kilometres and an east-west spread of 2,977 kilometres gives a picture of the enormity of IGNOU's responsibility. Also included in IGNOU's jurisdiction are the Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands.

As a national open university one of IGNOU's principle aims is to strengthen and promote distance education nationally. Another aim is to widen access to higher education through the use of distance education methodologies.

Organisational structure of IGNOU

The organisational structure of IGNOU differs considerably from those of conventional universities. The largest administrative units at IGNOU are its Schools and Divisions. Schools of Studies in the major disciplines have principal responsibility for the design, development preparation and maintenance of the self-instructional course materials. The Divisions and Sections are mandated to produce and distribute course materials – print and nonprint; to perform student admissions and evaluation duties; to keep and manage student records and to provide support to students including academic counselling and library services. Table 1 is an organisational chart of IGNOU.

A unique aspect of IGNOU's organisational structure is the Regional Services Division.

Regional Services Division

The basic function of IGNOU's Regional Services Division (RSD) is to identify suitable places and institutions where Regional Centres (RC) and Study Centres (SC) can be located. The availability of infrastructural facilities and the number of registered students are critical determining factors. The RSD also assists SCs to provide strong student support services to facilitate the distance students' pursuit of an academic education as independent learners. The RSD is responsible for the administration and management of RCs and SCs.

Regional and Study Centres

IGNOU functions through a network of 16 RCs and 215 SCs located across the union and territories of India. Geography and location are some of the factors that are used to determine the location of RCs and SCs. Another key factor is the availability of resource personnel who can perform the duties of

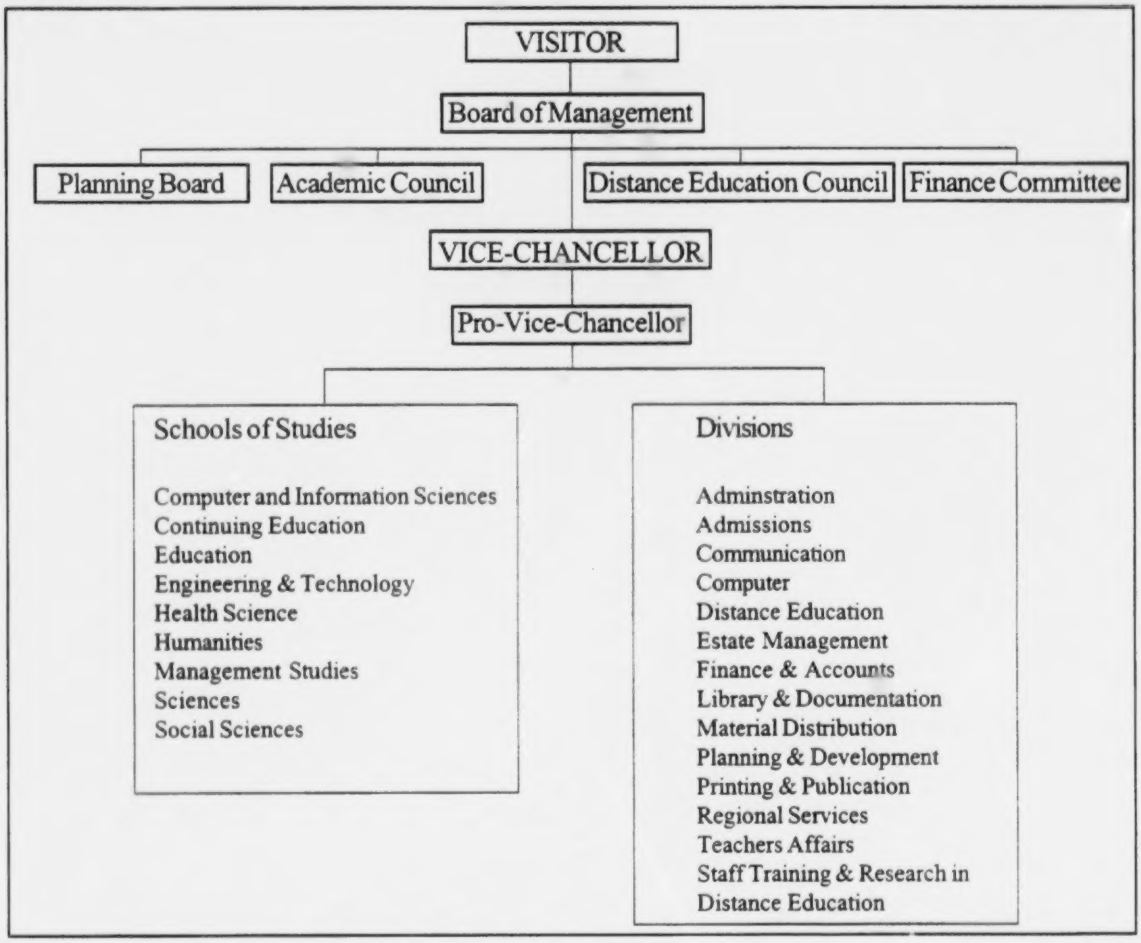


Table 1. IGNOU organizational chart

counsellors for the specific disciplines. Centres are located at existing universities, colleges and voluntary agency offices where possible. These are seen as good locations. In addition they are usually vacant on Sundays, holidays and on week-day evenings, which makes them available for distance teaching purposes.

Each SC has a coordinator, administrative staff and student counsellors. These persons are employed on a part-time basis.

The counsellors are experienced teachers who, as part-time employees, provide instructional support, guidance and counselling to students at the SCs. To facilitate the use of teaching materials, each SC is given a television, VCR and audio cassette player. A typewriter is also placed at each SC. The coordinators of the SCs organise counselling and contact sessions for their students. Counselling sessions enable students to seek guidance from a subject expert particularly to explain any area of incomprehension that the student may experience. The provision of counsellors is an attempt to reduce the separation that occurs in distance education between the teacher and the learner because of the absence of face-to-face teaching. Counselling sessions also enable students to gauge their academic progress. Assignments are submitted to counsellors for evaluation, comment and guidance. Continuous assessment is therefore an important aspect of IGNOU's programmes. Thus SCs are IGNOU's principal point of contact with students and they are also responsible for the execution of the university's educational programme.

The functioning of SCs is coordinated and supervised by the RCs. RCs are also entrusted with the responsibility of disseminating information about IGNOU programmes and courses. The organisation of orientation and training programmes for coordinators and counsellors; monitoring the conduct of the academic programmes at the SC; the submission of assignments, their evaluation and the communication of grades to the Evaluation Division in New Delhi are also responsibilities of RCs.

In an effort to decentralise its operations, from 1990—91 all new admissions to IGNOU were handled at the RCs. From 1992–93 RCs were made responsible for the distribution of materials to students. Hence, the RCs link the SCs in their region with the RSD. In order to organise an effective and efficient student support services network, the RSD functions in close cooperation with the Admissions, Evaluation, Computer and Material Distribution Divisions, the Schools of Studies, Regional Directors (RD) and Coordinators of SCs. Similar links are established with the state governments, universities, colleges and institutions of higher education, *inter alia*.

IGNOU

Year	Number of New Students	Number of new Regional Centres	Number of new Study Centres
1986–87	4,361	4	27
1987–88	16,811	4	68
1988–89	42,324	4	25
1989–90	48,281	1	13
1990–92	52,376	3	37
1991–92	62,355	-	31
1992–93	75,666	-	14

Table 2. Data on new students and the growth of RCs and SCs 1986–87 – 1992–93.

Enrollment of students

IGNOU's enrollment figures have increased steadily from its inception. The number of new students in 1992–93 was 75,666 as compared with 1986–87 when the number of new students was 4,361. To keep pace with the rising student numbers, the number of RCs and SCs have been similarly increased. Table 2 provides data on student enrollment and the growth of regional and study centres from 1986-93.

LIBRARY SERVICE NEEDS OF DISTANCE LEARNERS

The library requirements of IGNOU students are varied. They possess diverse characteristics they belong to different socio-economic, cultural and educational groups and they come from a range of linguistic backgrounds. Thus they require information on many subject areas and at varying levels of complexity. Distance learners need to have access to library resources, either for onsite reference purposes or to borrow them for home study. The materials needed may either be in the home library or accessed through inter-library loans from other institutions.

The library service needs of IGNOU's students can be divided into the following three categories:

- materials and facilities;
- information services; and
- user services.

Materials and facilities

The range of materials and facilities needed include:

- reference books and textbooks;
- self-instructional materials and packages developed by various distance teaching institutions;
- audiovisual hardware and software including computers needed to access information stored in various formats;
- typewriters, word processors, photocopiers and other types of reprography equipment;
- lecture rooms or other spaces for learners to meet and use audiovisual materials; and
- library facilities for reading, storing and displaying materials to ensure quick and easy access to retrieve information.

Information sources

A range of sources needs to be tapped to respond to the information needs of IGNOU's staff and students. Library staff should be able to provide up-to-date bibliographic information about reference sources, books, journals and nonprint materials. These may be available within the IGNOU system or at any library on the sub-continent, which would then be supplied through inter-library loans. The types of sources that could be used for the satisfaction of information needs include:

- self-instructional materials, multimedia materials, educational programmes, radio broadcasts and television programmes; and
- any other organisation that provides education and training through distance and information on their courses.

Other information that could be required is the location of IGNOU's RCs and SCs, their contact and counselling programmes, summer schools, laboratory and library facilities, special lectures, available resources and facilities *inter alia*.

User services

Adult, independent learners need professional assistance and support from the library staff on:

- using the library collection;
- using equipment and facilities available in the library;
- providing guidance on the suitability of materials to support their courses;
- assistance in planning their learning; and
- developing and using study skills for independent learning.

To provide the necessary access to the information required, it is essential to have a well-trained library staff to collect, process, organise, store and disseminate information to users. Library staff must have the necessary tools to provide the up-to-date information that academic and administrative staff need for teaching, research and materials production. They must also provide library services to support the learning needs of students as well as professional guidance and support in all aspects of information literacy and use.

In order to satisfy the library and information requirements of the staff and students of IGNOU, the library staff should be willing to provide user education and information literacy training. Librarians have to develop the skills to provide such training and education. Communication with library patrons is an important facet of distance library services. Library services and holdings can be publicised through newsletters, posters, notices, guides, face-to-face contact or through the development and production of nonprint materials.

To provide the very diverse range of library and information services at IGNOU, one of the major academic support units is the Library and Documentation Division.

Library and Documentation Division of IGNOU (LDD)

The role of a library within an academic institution is guided by the institution's philosophy. The main objectives of IGNOU are to:

- advance and disseminate learning and knowledge by a diversity of means – including the use of modern communication technology; and to
- provide opportunities for higher education to all sectors of the society whether they live in urban, rural, remote, backward or hilly areas.

In order to satisfy the broad philosophy of IGNOU a summary of the objectives of the LDD is as follows:

- to develop collections of information materials to satisfy the general and special needs of staff and students at IGNOU's Headquarters, RCs and SCs;
- to provide reading, lending, reference, information and documentation services and facilities to staff and students;
- to provide documents and comprehensive reference information services in areas related to distance education to other open universities, especially to those in India.

The attainment of these objectives is not easy as IGNOU is hampered by several constraints such as the lack of adequate space, staff and finance.

Network of libraries at IGNOU

The library network of IGNOU is a three-tiered structure. The sections are:

- The Library and Documentation Division, i.e., Central/Main Library at Headquarters
- Libraries at the RCs
- Libraries at the SCs

The Central Library combines the features and functions of both an academic and a special library. This dual responsibility increases the complexity of library management policies for collection development and providing services.

Collection development for the network of libraries at IGNOU

To ensure consistency and standardisation in technical services, acquisition activities and collection development is centralised at the Central Library. The number of copies acquired depends on the number of sites that have students for a particular course. Course requirements and availability of materials are the main factors used in the selection process. Suggested titles for reading are also acquired for the libraries of the system.

Responsibility for the selection of library materials is shared between the professional librarians and academic staff. Print and nonprint titles needed to facilitate the production of course materials are also purchased. In addition, the Central Library has a useful collection of materials on distance education as a discipline.

Selection sources include visits to major book shops, book fairs and exhibitions as well as the perusal of sample copies sent by publishers and booksellers. Additionally, academic staff are sent, from the library copies of publishers' announcements, catalogues and pre-publication jackets. Subject specific bibliographies derived from printed and electronic selection tools are also drawn to the attention of academic staff.

In addition to supporting academic library patrons with traditional user profiles, other users are course writers, translators and editors, producers and media consultants, professional, technical and administrative staff all of whom are important in course development and the delivery of distance education. Libraries at the RCs support the work of IGNOU at that level. The resources of these collections are also made available to academicians and researchers who are able to go to these collections and consult their materials. The principal users of the collections at SCs are counsellors and students.

Library and information services to the users of the Central Library

The nature of a distance learning institution dictates that its libraries will perform traditional and non-traditional services. At the Central Library the following routine services are provided:

- reading services;
- lending services;
- inter-library loan services;
- user services;
- reference and information services;
- reprographic services;
- spiral binding services; and
- lamination services.

Specialised services in the field of distance education for staff at the Main Campus, RCs and SCs are served by the special collection of distance education materials that is located at the Central Library This special collection is also used by students registered for postgraduate diplomas and master's degrees in distance education. Also using this collection are staff at state open universities, correspondence directorates and other interested users who require information about distance education and open university systems. The resources of this special collection are augmented by:

- newspaper clippings;
- indexing services;
- bibliographic services; and
- documentation services.

The Central Library is also required to maintain an archive collection of newspaper clippings and articles on all aspects of distance education in India. RC and SC coordinators contribute to this resource base by sending items of significance that appear in their local newspapers and other state publications. Thus, clippings, journal articles, information brochures and other desiderata from a wide variety of sources are available. Photographs taken at IGNOU and of IGNOU activities at any location are also actively collected and stored at the Central Library.

There is a great demand from faculty to provide additional specialised services. These include:

- abstracting services;
- current awareness services;
- selective dissemination of information;
- micrographic services; and
- facilities for viewing and listening to audiovisual materials.

The widening of the specialised service base will become feasible when the collection is relocated to the new library which is currently being constructed. The new library will provide the space needed by the collection which has expanded considerably from when it was begun as well as providing for projected collection growth. The new building will enable the library to have an integrated collection as there will be ample accommodation for both print and nonprint formats. At present the audiovisual collection is housed in the Communications Division, which is some distance away from the Central Library.

Problems faced by the Central Library

The library is presently housed in a temporary building. In order for the library to gain maximum use from this space, internal partitions have been erected. Work areas have been created in the first half. The remainder of the hall is used for stacks, circulation desk, periodicals display, reading room, reference section and free-standing catalogue cabinets. Furniture is used to demarcate the specific spaces.

At IGNOU, the lack of space hampers the availability of facilities such as carrels and small sound-proofed spaces for individual and small group work. The library also suffers from poor lighting as well as inadequate heating and cooling services. The new purpose-built building, when completed, should correct many of these problems.

The library budget is inadequate to purchase all the materials needed by staff and students. In addition, the prices of materials are increasing and therefore the ability of the budget to meet demands is shrinking. Another type of financial constraint is created by the literature explosion – with more and more books and other formats of information storage becoming available, the library's collection development efforts are unable to keep pace with the output of material.

The self-instructional course materials sent to undergraduate and certificate programme students seek to provide all the information that they will require to complete their course successfully. Thus for these student access to a well-developed library, though ideal, is not as critical. Nevertheless the library recognises that access to a wide range of materials enhances a student's learning programme. Additionally, restricted access to a well-developed library retards the development of information literacy skills.

On the other hand IGNOU postgraduate degree and diploma programmes are so structured that students are required to use library facilities. Some of these programmes require either a dissertation, project report or a practical component, all of which demand the extensive use of a well-stocked library. Books and articles listed as "suggested reading" at the end of each unit/block work need to be consulted so that students can complete their assignments and prepare for their final examinations.

Because India is a multilingual country, collection development is hampered by another complication. Students in the different states expect the library to supply course materials in their regional language. While this is possible for some titles, publications in engineering, science, technology, computer science and other specialised disciplines are not readily available in many languages. The cost to produce titles in multiple indigenous languages is prohibitive. It is also time consuming.

Another factor affecting the functioning of this library is an inadequate level of staff. The small team of committed and dedicated staff is hard pressed to satisfy user demands. As book stocks, journal subscriptions, university staff, services and other activities expand every year, the library staff is stretched to execute routine functions regularly and systematically. As a result, library staff are unable to function effectively and efficiently. IGNOU's authorities are both aware and convinced of the need for more staff. A Norms Committee has been constituted to suggest guidelines for the recruitment of professional semi-professional, technical and administrative library staff.

Library and information services to the users of the RCs and SCs

The patron profiles of RCs and SCs library users vary considerably from those of persons who use the Central Library. Appropriate library and information services are as vital to distance learners as they are to their peers in conventional universities. At present the RCs and SCs of IGNOU provide the following services to their distance learners:

- reading services;
- reference and information services;
- listening to audio materials; and
- viewing visual materials.

These services are available when a centre is opened to students for counselling sessions or contact programmes, during the evenings and on holidays.

The RCs are well-equipped with modern electronic and communication equipment to enable them to be in contact with headquarters. These include telephone, cable, telex, fax and E-mail. Television sets, VCR players and audio cassette players facilitate onsite access to information presented in these formats. Photocopiers and computers are also available at each RC.

Each SC has a TV set, a VCR and audio cassette player. In addition to its library, each SC also has a copy of all course materials, reference books and audiovisual materials produced by IGNOU as well as reference books for any course that a particular SC facilitates.

The ultimate goal of the university is to have a photocopier in every SC. This service is considered to be necessary given the expanding role of the SCs, student needs and administrative requirements. At present, only 16 SCs have photocopiers. Factors taken into consideration for locating these units were location, ease of access to other photocopiers in the area and the size of the student body at the SC. The availability of photocopiers will enable students to copy limited or scarce data for their personal use.

Computers are placed in SCs which offer the Diploma in Computers for Office Management and the Bachelor's Degree in Library and Information Science (BLIS) courses. The CDS/ISIS - 2.3 software package with a manual is provided at all 35 centres which have students in the BLIS course. Successful completion of the "Computer applications in libraries" is one of the requirements of the BLIS programme. Hence the availability of a computer at the SCs with the appropriate software is mandatory.

In spite of pressing demands from students, IGNOU is not able to offer user services on a full-time basis at these centres. This is because the facilities are available only on a part-time basis, and staffing levels are low owing to financial constraints.

SURVEY CONDUCTED TO REALISE THE REQUIREMENTS OF LIBRARY USERS

In order to ascertain from users their perception of, and needs and problems with, the library services at IGNOU a user survey was conducted in 1992/3. Specific information was sought in the following areas:

- adequacy of space for reading room and stack areas;
- convenience of seating arrangements;
- adequacy and usefulness of the collection, technical processing, organisation, display, storing and retrieval of materials and information;
- adequacy of staff, their attitude towards users and quality of user services;
- adequacy of the scope, range and depth of the collection;
- adequacy of the range of formats collected;
- usefulness of computerisation of library operations in information storage, retrieval and dissemination from the Central Library;
- adequacy of services provided by the Central Library to meet the requirements and expectations of staff at Headquarters, RCs and SCs. Identification of problems with these services as well as suggestions on improvements were also invited from these persons on the services of the Central Library.

Data collection

Questionnaires and interviews were the two data collection methods used. Individual questionnaires were devised for the following groups:

- Academic staff;
- Directors of Regional Services;
- Coordinators of SCs; and
- Counsellors and students attached to the SCs.

To expedite the receipt of responses some of the questionnaires were distributed and collected manually from 25 academic staff who are regular users of the Central Library. Most of these faculty members also visit the RCs every year to participate in the orientation programmes for coordinators of new SCs and the counsellors of the programmes offered at these Centres. Thus, their inputs were deemed to be reliable sources of information on the facilities available at the libraries of the SCs. Further, their suggestions for the improvement of library services to distance learners would be based on personal experience and observation. Table 3 provides information in the distribution pattern of the survey instrument as well the response rate.

The questionnaire for RDs, coordinators, counsellors and students were sent to all RDs. They were requested to make enough copies for distribution in their region. Each RD was to poll at least five coordinators, 10 counsellors and 20 students of various programmes. This polling procedure was adopted because it provided the best way to:

- get information from a broad-based group of persons who are associated with IGNOU programmes;
- get information from all states and union territories;
- receive prompt replies; and
- have a representative and judicious sample.

IGNOU Library Survey

Category of User	Questionnaires Distributed	Responses Received	Response Percentage
Academic Staff	25	22	88
Regional Directors	16	10	62.5
Coordinators	80	54	67.5
Counsellors	160	96	60
Students	320	208	65

Table 3. Distribution of and return data on survey instrument

Personal interviews were conducted with the Director of the Regional Services Division and the Head of the Library and Documentation Division. These interviews sought to gather their views and opinions on the expectations of all users of the IGNOU library system. In addition, there were expected to provide their perspective on the problems faced by IGNOU's authorities, the Librarian, RDs and Coordinators with regard to accessing library services. Suggestions for improving the system were also elicited.

Data analysis and interpretation

Analysis of the data received revealed the following major concerns:

- shortage of space
- insufficient staffing; and
- an inadequate collection.

Libraries are growing organisms, therefore problems such as shortage of space, imbalances in library staff/user ratios and the inability to service new and expending demands occur from time-to-time in many academic libraries. Given the very fluid nature of distance teaching institutions, the significance of these difficulties assume added weight. Ultimately these factors impacted on the quality of library services available from such institutions.

Specific analysis revealed that:

- 82% of the staff found the collection inadequate, although 67% of them agreed that books that they had recommended had been acquired by the library. Two main factors accounted for this negative perception. Most of the books recommended by the staff had a pre-1980 publication date. Therefore many were no longer in print. Secondly, orders of titles for new and/or forthcoming courses were still pending and therefore they were not available for circulation.
- 74% of the staff surveyed reported that the library was well organised and that the books and journals were easy to locate. They also found that the system used to display these materials met their needs. Ninety-one percent reported that they could not locate books or journals on their own.

One of the difficulties in open access systems is that books are frequently mis-shelved by users when they are browsing the stacks. The lack of adequate staff prevents shelf rectification on a regular basis.

- 96% of the staff reported favourably on the willingness of the library staff to assist them in locating materials, responding to reference queries and providing information services. However, the unanimous perception was that the staff was too small to provide the level of user service needed and particularly to respond instantaneously to help readers with specific problems. Most respondents felt that the staff helped them to the best of their ability but that a qualitative improvement was needed, and that the only solution was additional staff.
- 85% of the staff found that the user services areas were not comfortable. Cited were inadequate lighting and that climatic control equipment should be installed given the extremes in the weather in New Delhi. Efforts are being made to make the environment of the library more suitable for serious reading and associated activities.
- 64% of the staff wanted all new additions to stock displayed prominently.
- 33% of the staff wanted cabins or carrels for individual work. Most of the issues related to inconvenience by the faculty will be redressed and addressed when the library moves into its purpose-built facility.
- 87% of the staff felt that the maintenance of the library was detrimentally affected by the lack of adequate administrative and professional library staff. Included in these concerns were the backlog of materials to be processed; catalogue maintenance; shelving; shelf-reading and the need to improve reference and information services. The appointment of additional staff was seen as the only solution to these issues.
- 72% of the staff required additional specialised services such as current awareness; selective dissemination of information; indexing and abstracting; bibliography service and personal access to online computerised databases and catalogues.
- 45% of the staff wanted to be able to listen to and view nonprint materials at the Central Library.

Other suggestions included an increased budget to purchase books, newspapers, reference sources, subject bibliographies, CD-ROM databases and other formats used to store information. Also requested was that the number of borrowers' tickets issued to patrons be increased from 10 to 20.

Some of these demands are not unreasonable and library staff are aware of the problems and limitations. Corrective measures to reduce the known limitations as well as the introduction of new and expanded services will be implemented after the new building is occupied.

The analysis of the responses received from the RDs, coordinators of SCs, counsellors and students to the questionnaire revealed that in relation to collection development and non-print materials:

- 87% of them reported that the collections were adequate but under-utilised as lending privileges were not available.
- 78% of the students wanted to have more Hindi and regional language books for reference.
- 67% of the coordinators suggested that more copies of textbooks should be supplied so that students and counsellors could have borrowing privileges.
- 58% of the coordinators suggested that all IGNOU course materials and audiovisual programmes should be placed at their Centres even if those courses were not a part of their centres' programming.
- 67% of the RDs and coordinators felt that journals for postgraduate programmes and on distance education should be available.
- 75% of the centres reported that they received the general publications of IGNOU, e.g. brochures, journals and newsletters regularly and they were displayed in a prominent place in the Centres.

Concerning the organisation of books and audiovisual materials the following information was submitted:

- 87% of the RCs and SCs have books arranged by subject on the shelves to facilitate easy location.

- 100% of all RCs and SCs have sets of examinations papers of previous years. These are filed according to programme for easy access.
- 100% of the RCs and SCs use the programme/course/discipline system to file their audiovisual materials on shelves. This facilitated easy retrieval.

With respect to infrastructural facilities such as space, furniture, equipment, staff and funds at the RCs and SCs the following responses were received:

- 67% of them reported that they did not have sufficient space for stacks, reading room and display purposes.
- 40% needed more shelving and book cases for storage and display.
- 83% indicated that they did not have proper spaces for listening and/or viewing audiovisual materials.
- 98% of the audiovisual equipment was working (at the time of the survey).
- 100% of the RCs had photocopiers.
- 90% of the SCs did not have photocopiers.
- 81% of the RCs have a semi-professional library staff member who manages these libraries.
- 72% of the SCs indicated that they wanted a part-time semi-professional staff member to manage their library.
- 58% of the RDs and coordinators stated that they required more funds for the acquisition of books, journals, magazines and newspapers for the centres.

When asked to identify areas of need, the following data emerged:

- 100% of the RDs, coordinators of SCs, counsellors and students requested that procedures be adopted to allow the issuing of books, course materials and audiovisual programmes for home study. Some respondents recommended that security deposits be levied and fines be imposed when books and audiovisual materials are returned past their due date.
- 85% of the administrators and students suggested that the libraries of the RCs and SCs should be open every day of the week, including holidays. Also requested were longer hours of opening so that students could make the maximum use of library facilities.

The principal problems cited were:

- 30% of the centres had acute space problems. Lacking were sufficient shelves to store the existing collection. Also needed was sufficient space for shelves. Inadequate space affects the functioning of libraries.
- 80% of the administrators and users of the library have requested additional catalogue cabinets. They have also requested timely dispatches of catalogue cards for books received. This will enable users to access the collections more easily. Staff shortages at the Central Library account for the delay in the production and supply of catalogue cards.

Also emerging from the survey were views on the role of the RCs and SCs within the IGNOU organisation generally and on its library and information services in particular.

A number of persons indicated that a more permanent arrangement should be made to house the library collections of the RCs properly. Effective steps should also be taken to have permanent library staff appointed so that the collection could be built up and used to better advantage. The institution of borrowing privileges was also requested.

It was also felt that all RCs and SCs should be supplied with all audiovisual materials that are produced by IGNOU. Some respondents felt that these programmes should be loaned for limited periods.

The majority of respondents at SCs wanted improved library facilities at these sites. They wanted not only reference services but also borrowing privileges. This has two major cost implications, particularly given the large number of SCs. Materials for reference collections are usually more expensive than general titles. Secondly, establishing a lending library is a very costly exercise. Undoubtedly proper library and information services are important factors in independent learning. At the same time the institutional cost is high. This raises the issue of community resources and how these, especially the public libraries, can support distance education and other forms of independent learning.

THE ROLE OF ACADEMIC AND SPECIAL LIBRARIES IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Libraries in many colleges in India exist in name only. The few well-organised college libraries find it difficult to meet the needs of their own students. Thus they are not in a position to render assistance – even in a limited way – to distance learners.

University libraries are well-equipped and organised through the benefaction of the University Grants Committee. However, these libraries are located in large cities. Consequently, the ease of access to library services that urban students enjoy is not replicated in the experience of rural and remote students.

Specialised collections are of limited value to undergraduate students. These collections are useful to postgraduate and diploma students who are pursuing programmes in the particular disciplines served by such collections. Inter-library loan arrangements with other universities and special libraries are established by IGNOU so that these resources are available to its postgraduate students and academic staff.

In September 1991, a committee was appointed by IGNOU to consider the guidelines for opening IGNOU Book Corners (IBCs) at a number of traditional universities and other educational institutions around the country. The purposes of the IBCs are to popularise IGNOU's aims and objectives; to explain the educational methodology used for this form of education and to make readily available IGNOU's teaching materials for general use by the learning community in the country. The host institution would need to provide sufficient space and furniture at an easily accessible place for the IBC so that IGNOU course materials, general publications, journals, newsletters, bulletins, information brochures, leaflets and other materials could be displayed in a systematic, attractive and organised manner. As a result of these arrangements IGNOU would have at its disposal a system that facilitates, with ease, the widespread dissemination of its materials that are for sale or free distribution. A 50% rebate could be offered on the items that are available for sale.

ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

The concept of public libraries, as traditionally understood in India, is to provide library services for education, enrichment and recreation. The existence and development of Indian public libraries depend on a library cess (fee) levied on the public as a part of their property taxes. Hence, it is obligatory for libraries to serve all citizens including independent learners. There is precedence for this approach to provide library services to distance learners. Students at the (British) Open University at Milton Keynes and Sukhothai Thammathiart Open University in Bangkok, Thailand get their library support principally from the well-established and highly developed public library systems in their countries.

In India, the level of services given by the public libraries to distance learners of the correspondence institutions and open university could be greatly improved. A positive step would be the enactment of appropriate legislation making it mandatory for the public library to provide library services to distance learners. At present only eight states *viz* Tamil Nadu (1948), Andhra Pradesh (1960), Karantake (1965), Maharashtra (1967), West Bengal (1979) Manipur (1988), Keral and Harayana (1989) have library legislation. Though legislation has not been enacted in the remaining states, most of them already have well-established functioning public library systems. The enactment of library legislation and the harmonization of these laws would create a functional public library system in all States and Union Territories of India, enabling them to play a key role in supporting distance education.

A well-established public library system would form the basis of a system providing services to persons regardless of where they lived. The existence of a well-resourced public library system in each state is a necessary precursor to a national network of public libraries. Such a network would form the basis of intra-state and inter-state linkages which would be of great assistance to distance learners, whatever the level of their programme.

The nature of the assistance that public libraries can and could give to students of non-conventional programmes and courses is directly dependent on the level of information that these institutions give to the public library systems about their courses and the information needs that students will require to support their learning. Regular dispatch of up-to-date information on their institution, activities and courses would enable the public library to better serve their students.

In order to fulfill this enormous task, public libraries must have suitable infrastructural facilities such as adequate space, professional, trained, experienced and motivated staff and an organised user-orientated collection, *inter alia*. This is possible if the Central and State Governments provide adequate grants.

Another requirement is a well-coordinated and on-going dialogue between all of the parties involved in the use of public libraries to support distance education. This group must include the RDs of IGNOU, authorities of State Open Universities, the Director of the Public Library System and the Librarian of the State Central Library. A healthy relationship between the coordinators of IGNOU's SCs and the librarian of public libraries in every city, town and village is vital if such collaborative effort is to make a meaningful difference.

The establishment of "Library corners for distance learners" (LCDL) in public libraries is seen as a useful development. Prior to establishing LCDLs, RDs and state library officials must ensure that the necessary infrastructural facilities are available in the public libraries to be used. The institution of LCDLs should be done on an incremental basis so that state governments can have sufficient lead time to make the necessary arrangements. This would also enable IGNOU to develop LCDLs on a gradual basis rather than to institute them *en bloc*. This will facilitate the evaluation and improvement of services in a timely manner and without undue strain.

To institute a comprehensive trans-national library service to support distance learning the model below is proposed. The objectives of the model are to:

- increase the number of RCs and SCs within the IGNOU system;
- increase the number of library and information service points within the IGNOU system;
- improve the quality of library and information services that are available to the staff and students of IGNOU; and to
- improve IGNOU's delivery of library and information services.

The recommended timeframe for the institution of the model in any locality is six years, with a new phase being introduced every two years.

FUNCTIONAL MODEL FOR LIBRARY FACILITIES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS

Phase I

IGNOU should negotiate with state governments and institutions that host RCs to provide suitable accommodation for an IGNOU Resource Centres (IRC) for its distance learners. As more than 70% of IGNOU's students are from urban areas, it will be possible to render services to a large segment of students by establishing IRCs at the 16 RCs.

For students who live in rural, remote, hilly and backward areas, IGNOU has already established SCs. To augment the extremely limited resources in these areas, IGNOU on an incremental basis should request the authorities at SCs where there are more than 500 students to upgrade their infrastructural facilities. In addition, 15 new SCs should be established in different parts of the country in non-urban localities. The enrollment at these SCs may not be large but the library needs of these students cannot be satisfied by any other channel.

The strengthening of resources and facilities at all SCs and RCs will be conducted through all phases of this model.

Phase II

During this phase, authorities of SCs which have more than 3,000 students should be requested to improve and enhance the infrastructural facilities at their sites thus, upgrading them to become IRCs. in addition, 10 new SCs should be located in rural, remote and hilly areas.

A Proposed Functional Model for Library Services to Distance Learners in India

National Level

New Units	Sponsoring Agencies
Library Corners for Distance Learners	Central and State Governments Public Libraries
IGNOU Book Corners	University Grants Commission Universities Other educational institutions
Mobile Library Units for Rural, Remote, Hilly and Backward Areas	IGNOU in association with other cooperating institutions

Institutional Level – New Developments

PHASE I 16 additional RCs	10 SCs in rural, remote and hilly areas
PHASE II SCs with over 3000 students to be upgraded to IRCs	10 SCs in rural, remote and hilly areas
PHASE III SCs with over 2000 students to be upgraded to IRCs	10 SCs in rural, remote and hilly areas

Phase III

During this phase, IGNOU's SCs with more than 2,000 students should be upgraded to IRCs. Additionally 10 new SCs should be established in rural, remote and hilly areas.

Optional feature

Recommended as an optional feature of this model is the introduction of Mobile Library Units (MLUs) which would be used to transport core collections to students who are very remote and for whom the establishment of IRCs would be unrealistic. The collections for the MLUs would be developed by the Central Library after consultations with the coordinators of the relevant SCs.

The MLUs should be phased in gradually. The development of MLUs is in consonance with recent developments in the Indian philosophy of distance education where mobile training squads and mobile study centres are seen to be integral aspects of the delivery strategies that will be used.

This approach seeks to provide library services to an ever-widening pool of IGNOU students – regardless of where they live. The RCs and SCs should be well-equipped, organised and user-orientated in terms of collection, amenities and staffing. Multiple copies of textbooks recommended as "suggested reading" should be supplied for each course/programme so that borrowing privileges can be extended to students.

In order to reduce the financial burden on the institution, IGNOU distance learners could be charged one or a combination of any of the following:

- an annual membership fee;
- a deposit for accessing the lending services;
- a fine for overdue materials; and/or
- the replacement cost for a lost or damaged book.

The monies collected from these sources could be used to improve resources generally, or those at the specific site at which they were collected.

CONCLUSION

The spread of distance education throughout India demands that the issue of library services to distance learners be given systematic consideration. Given its national status it behoves IGNOU and its LDD to place this matter high on their development and planning agendas. The construction of new library facilities is a positive step in this regard. Another is the solution of the problems identified in the 1992/3 survey, so that user access will be improved in all areas. Including into the system the recommendations and suggestions of all the groups polled would be desirable. The implementation of recommendations that affect a large cross section of users would immediately improve the level of library services available to IGNOU's distance educators and students.

The integration of all tertiary-level institutions into the provision of information services for all learners at this level is vital. The role of the University Grants Committee and the Association of Indian Universities in this matter cannot be minimised.

Public libraries can and must have a role in the provision of library services to distance learners. There is an urgent need for devising a National Policy for Library Services to Distance Learners. Maximising the use of all of the resources available is demanded. Conflicting demands and needs will arise. Compromise is necessary and possible. What cannot continue is an absence of access to information, no matter who needs it or for whatever the learning purpose.

Appendix

List of IGNOU Regional Centres (RC), their operational areas and number of Study Centres (SC) attached to each RC

R.C. no.	RC name	Region Code	Operational Areas	No. of SCs
1	Ahmedabad	09	Gujarat	14
2	Bangalore	13	Karnataka	01
			Goa	
3	Bhopal	15	Madhya Pradesh	15
4	Bhubaneshwar	21	Orissa	12
5	Calcutta	28	West Bengal	12
		24	Sikkim	01
6	Cochin	14	Kerala	11
7	Delhi	07	Delhi	18
8	Hyderabad	01	Andhra Pradesh	10
9	Jaipur	23	Rajasthan	10
10	Karnal	10	Haryana	09
		22	Punjab	04
		06	Chandigarh	01
11	Lucknow	27	Uttar Pradesh	24
12	Madras	25	Tamil Nadu	13
		31	Pondicherry	01
		02	Andaman & Nicobar	01
13	Patna	05	Bihar	10
14	Pune	16	Maharashtra	13
15	Shillong	03	Arunachal Pradesh	01
		04	Assam	05
		17	Manipur	02
		18	Meghalaya	02
		19	Mizoram	01
		20	Nagaland	02
		26	Tripura	02
16	Shimla	11	Himachal Pradesh	08
		12	Jammu & Kashmir	02

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chaturvedi, S.N. and K. Anjanappa (1989). *Manual for co-ordinators of study centres.* 2nd ed. New Delhi: IGNOU/RSD.

Chaturvedi, S.N. *et al.*(1992). *Manual for academic counsellors.* 2nd ed. New Delhi: IGNOU/RSD.

Fischer, Raymond K. (1988). *Library services for adult continuing education and independent learning: a guide.* London: Library Association.

IGNOU (1992). *Annual report: 1991-92.* New Delhi: IGNOU.

— (1992). *Annual report: 1990-91.* New Delhi: IGNOU.

Isaac, K.A. and G. Devarajan (eds.) *Libraries in distance education.* New Delhi: Ess Ess.

Jagannathan, Neela (1993). *Library facilities at IGNOU: a case study.* [New Delhi: IGNOU] MLS dissertation.

— (1992a). "Libraries in open universities of India: issues and problems." *University news XXXV*, 31 August, 109-117.

— (1992b). "Libraries in distance education." *Indian journal of open learning 1*, (2) 33-36.

— (1989). "Library services to distance learners." *University news XXXXVII*, 20 November, 8-13.

— (1982). "Collection development at Andhra Pradesh Open University libraries." *Library acquisition: practice and theory 12*,(3/4) 281-296.

Koul, B.N. *et al.* (1988). *Studies in distance education,*. New Delhi: Association of Indian Universities and IGNOU.

Lewis, Roger (1986). "What is open learning?" *Open learning 1*, (2) 5-10.

Mehta, P.K. *et al.* (1992). *Manual for Regional Directors.* New Delhi: IGNOU/RSD.

Perry, Walter (1976). *Open university: a personal account by the First Vice-Chancellor.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Reddy, G. Ram (1987). *Readings in distance education, 1.* New Delhi: IGNOU.

LIBRARY SUPPORT – THE MISSING LINK IN SUPPORT SERVICES AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL FOR THE DISTANCE LEARNER IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING AFRICA

Magnus John

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 30 years, distance education systems and programmes in Africa have grown and expanded not only numerically but also in terms of the spread of the geographical footprint of individual operations. These systemic developments have not been accompanied by an equal growth in the status accorded to distance education. A major factor contributing to this state of affairs is the lack of local evaluative studies to support an informed justification for the spread of distance education in Africa. Further, until recently, there was no up-to-date information available on the subject. John (1991) brought together details on the distance teaching institutions operating on the continent. Until international organisations such as the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE – Norway), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO – France), The Commonwealth of Learning (COL – Canada) and Agence de Coopération Culturelle et Technique (ACCT – France) became involved in the operations of distance education programmes in Africa, collaboration of effort either in the development of joint projects or the exchange of ideas was rarely practised, sought or considered. But concern about the status of distance education must have been widespread, given its importance on the agenda of UNESCO's Priority Africa Programme that culminated in the Distance Education in Africa Seminar held in Arusha (Tanzania) in September 1990.

Arising from this seminar organised by UNESCO was the recommendation that centres of excellence in distance education within Africa should be identified and strengthened in order to support capacity building within the continent (UNESCO, 1990). In effect, this seminar was a confirmation by UNESCO of its conviction on the effectiveness of this mode of delivery for education. UNESCO's work in this area also gave the discipline some much-needed status. In Africa, distance education spans both the non-formal and formal sectors. It has been, and is being, applied across a broad spectrum of educational endeavours: in the development of practical skills in agriculture, in literacy and health projects, in primary and secondary schooling, in the professional training of teachers and health workers as well as for university education.

Nevertheless the need to provide increased educational opportunities at the secondary level in Africa had to be instituted quickly and at a cost that countries found manageable. The economies of scale that distance education affords recommended this strategy highly. Over the last three decades, a massive expansion in formal education took place at the primary level. Consequently, there was a need for a greater intake at the secondary level than the traditional schools could accommodate. To cope with the expansion, teachers had to be trained quickly and inexpensively (Hawkridge, *et al.*, 1982; Chale, 1983; Lassa, 1983; Curran and Murphy, 1992; Kinyanjui, 1992; Chivore, 1993). All of this occurred at a time when most of the countries in Africa were beset with declining financial resources.

Consequently, distance learning institutions were established, especially in East Africa, to cope with the pressing demand for an expansion in the number of places available at the secondary level. Throughout the continent, commercially run correspondence schools survived and thrived precisely because of this need. Such a practical solution to a crisis situation has, however, generated other concerns. The overriding ones are the questions of parity, equity and credibility between the rival systems of delivering education. That condition has hardly eased, and its consequence for the quality of education provision is well-documented (World Bank, 1988). Support for the student being taught at a distance has also suffered in the process.

One possible explanation is that support provided to distance learners in Africa has inevitably been prescribed by the constraints under which such institutions operate. Administrative and managerial functions have evolved to satisfy operational needs as they occurred and required attention. The small units that constitute most distance teaching establishments in Africa and elsewhere are constrained by the management and financial decisions which are revised without an official change of policy. These decisions often affect course production and development. Even where the potential of distance education (Perraton, 1982) is acknowledged, particularly for solving problems of quality and quantity in an educational crisis, the institutional practice in existence is inevitably rooted in the organisational culture (Costello, 1993). This often creates an administrative mismatch between intention and reality. This is not the case in most developed countries where distance education guidelines and procedures are established which are later evaluated and improved upon.

This mismatch, which is a reality of many developing countries, also has implications for the quality of support services provided to distance learners in Africa. I shall later advance the view, however, that instances do occur where "compensatory factors" have emerged to aid the teaching/learning process. An awareness of the local educational and cultural factors may have contributed to this phenomenon, whereby interaction between the provision made by the key partners in education could result in a dynamic situation to which the distance learner also responds. The overall effect of that process amounts to some kind of support to the distance learner.

The reverse situation also holds true – where a lack of awareness for the requirements of education within a cultural environment adversely affects the level of support that could be provided to the distance learner. The approach to the discussion of student support services in distance education in Africa in this paper will, therefore, be all-embracing, with regard to library support for distance learners as they are seldom integrated into any support service provided for the distance learner. Besides, public libraries, an infrastructure which could be utilised to support distance education, are so dispersed that they are virtually non-existent. The scope of the article is limited to secondary level programmes in English-speaking Africa.

MODELS FROM THE WEST

There is hardly any distance teaching institution in Africa that is not modeled on one in existence outside the continent and, more often than not, on one in operation in the developed world. It is fitting therefore to set the scene with an observation of practice current in the West (i.e., most developed countries). Recent reviews of the library service provision to distance learners in Australia and Canada not only refer to guidelines which are the basis of library provision generally, but also evaluate current practice for consistency of provision between off-campus and on-campus students (Tucker, 1992, 1993; Canada. Council of Ministers of Education, 1993). The impact of electronic communications is also seen as having affected library provision in a positive way for the user.

The experiences of these countries in offering support services to local students living in geographically remote areas are relevant to the African context. In Britain, the emphasis is different, because the public library system, under the Public Library Act, is enjoined to maintain an efficient library system nationally. Distance learners, if they so choose, are therefore able to avail themselves of the facilities in this system, aided sometimes with guides (in the case of the U.K. Open University) on the effective use of library resources of relevance to their course. In all cases, however, an attempt is made to integrate library support with course requirements.

Generally, access to libraries is only one kind of support available to the distance learner. In the West, other services include face-to-face tuition, broadcast media, counselling and electronic communication facilities. When integrated into the distance learner's programme, the total package of support services has a positive effect. It contributes to the teaching/learning process and aids the convergence of the two delivery systems of education. In Western countries the educational value of each system has been widely debated especially with regard to the performance of distance students versus intramural students. African countries have failed, however, to apply the practice of such models with regard to support services to the distance learners.

While infrastructural limitations may affect the extent of support provided to the distance learner in Africa, there are also economic, social and cultural factors that impinge on education generally and, by implication, on distance education in particular. The effect of these factors warrants activities that call for stronger support for libraries. One of the main issues that affects library development, in my view, is the dichotomy in the education process between the language of formal education and that of everyday life. The ability to comprehend quickly distance teaching materials reduces the level of isolation of the distance student. The assumption of the existence of a linguistic culture which aids the understanding of print-based textual materials (which are often in a second language) would therefore be erroneous. The development of a support system in Africa which integrates library provision and socio-cultural-linguistic realities with course requirements would enhance the quality of programmes and help to reduce the level of isolation of the distance learner.

PRACTICAL EDUCATIONAL ISSUES IN AFRICA AFFECTING THE MODEL

In all respects, the responsibility for the provision of student support could be said to be shared among the key partners in education – the politicians, education administrators and teachers. The onus of delivery may not necessarily be shared with the same level of commitment. Nor is the level of quality such that all the key partners would approve. Support suffers in such circumstances. In developing countries, particularly in the African context, what is crucial is that all the key partners assume their responsibility in providing the infrastructural requirements for the delivery of distance education.

The learning style adopted by the distance learner in Africa (Jenkins, 1981; Wilson, 1993) creates an opportunity for the introduction of a support element into the learning process in much the same way that the absence of libraries, for example, influences the way in which course material is prepared. In fact, it is the outcome of a set of educational and cultural factors that have caused the partners involved in education to intervene and to provide support for their students faced with a peculiar set of circumstances.

It is worth pointing out too that distance learners in Africa are disadvantaged from the onset by factors affecting their study which are caused by circumstances outside their control. Nevertheless these circumstances dictate that student support services are very necessary if high levels of success are to be enjoyed by students. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the medium of instruction in the teaching/learning process. John (1984) examines the issue of teaching and learning with materials developed in a print-based culture in societies that are traditionally oral. These attributes can in themselves be described as cultural assets which favour independent study in the West. Their absence in English-speaking countries in Africa are the cause of a number of educational hurdles that these students face. However, course developers and administrators operating in Africa are aware of the prevailing social and economic conditions and so develop strategies which might help the distance learner cope with the additional teaching/learning difficulties.

THE NATURE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION SUPPORT IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

Distance education does not thrive in any society in isolation from the infrastructural developments that are necessary for its enhancement (Jenkins, 1990). But these developments need to be effective as resources to warrant their use in the delivery process. There is no point, for example, in introducing a broadcast component in a distance taught course where the distribution of television is low or where the range of radio coverage is restricted to only a small part of the country when the student population may be widely scattered. In such cases, alternative strategies have to be found by the institution to overcome the communication problem experienced by students living in remote areas. The Mauritius College of the

Air has been cited for the successful way in which it developed an excellent marketing strategy for its product, through which it aimed to improve on the quality of secondary education (Perraton, 1982). Access to the material was ensured through broadcast and general sale.

Secondary education provision in Africa has reached a crisis point where, in spite of the increase in the number of children attending school in the 1980s and 1990s, less resources (as much as 25%) are being made available than in the 1960s (Jenkins, 1990). That in itself does not make the prospect of distance education as an alternative mode any more acceptable to either parents or students, especially since it is often the less able pupil who fails to gain entrance into a traditional secondary school who ends up as the distance learner. How are they supported, given the fact that the language of instruction is not their mother tongue, and given that libraries are not only poorly resourced where they exist but are also very thinly spread? The following statements, extracted from the (British) Open University, International Centre for Distance Learning database (1994), provide rare insights into what I have previously referred to as either "learning styles" or "compensatory factors":

Students receive workbooks and worksheets. Weekend courses are also organised for correspondence students where there are study centres. Primary and secondary school buildings are usually made available to correspondence students as study centres. (Botswana. Ministry of Education, Department of Non-Formal Education)

The course lessons are meant to be comprehensive and can be used with or without aid of books. (Ghana. Institute of Adult Education, Distance Education Unit)

The main form of distance teaching employed ... is the use of self-instructional study guides/ workbooks. [The Centre] *...provides support services for its students in several ways: face-to-face tuition provided at Saturday courses, the running of residential courses for exam sitters, study vouchers, chivy letters, ... a series of radio programmes in most subjects, a weekly radio programme on good study habits.* (Lesotho. Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre)

Radio and cassette players are provided at Study Centres and Night Secondary Schools. ... There are 180 Study Centres and 33 Night Secondary Schools throughout the country. (Malawi. Malawi College of Distance Education)

For some 20 years the college has run study groups in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. Students are enrolled individually through responsible authorities who provide rooms and furniture and supervise activities of "mentors" (unqualified school leavers) who are paid as unqualified teachers by the Ministry of Education. (Zimbabwe. Central African Correspondence College).

A difference in the function of study centres in Africa is that they are regarded as places where students go to study, not necessarily to receive instruction. In Zimbabwe, mentors are provided, not to teach but to supervise the class, to maintain order so as to enable students to get on with their work. One gets the impression that a similar situation is in operation in Botswana, while in Tanzania, study circles have been established at the Cooperative Education Centre for its younger students. It is reported also that in Malawi teachers trained to work in primary schools are available at the study centres to guide students for up to six hours a day (Jevons, *et al.*, 1987; Mkandawire and Jere, 1988).

Does this kind of assembly, engrossed in individual interaction with their study material, embody a supportive role in the learning process? A classroom effect is created but the interaction is for the most part with study texts. Admittedly, one cannot ignore the possibility of the home environment not being conducive to private study. It cannot be denied that the difference in study centre function offers another dimension not only to the meaning of study centres, but also to the learning process that it promotes in the African context. The support that it engenders, while not explicit, is an ingredient that enhances the learning process. The few public libraries to be found in large towns in African countries could be said to play a similar role for general student support as undesignated study centres.

It is interesting to observe that there is no mention of libraries in any of the above statements about support provided by the institutions to their distance taught students. But it may not be the case that all these institutions offer no library support. However, the statements represent a practical awareness of an unsatisfactory situation where children who are being taught in a language which is foreign to them are not being provided with the necessary support materials. Absent are the appropriate verbal and written exposure to the variety of reading material that will equip them with adequate language skills for achieving written and verbal competence. This deficiency would not have escaped the notice of the course writers who are themselves products of the same system. To that extent, written material would be developed to aid the student to overcome problems associated with concepts introduced in their studies and with elements of style to aid competence in written expression. In other words, the material would have to be prepared in such a way as to motivate the student sufficiently and continuously throughout the course. In addition, guided course material in the form of workbooks and worksheets are developed to limit the need to have additional printed texts, which are usually very expensive when they are imported.

Given the limited face-to-face interaction available, the student has virtually one source (i.e., the course material) to depend upon for comprehension of the course content, for exposure to varieties of style, language and vocabulary acquisition. Course writers, as key partners in the delivery process, are therefore placed in an unenviable position where they have a high level of responsibility for developing the students' potential to the fullest. Does the absence of access to writings other than those prepared for the course indirectly limit support available to the distance learner? If the main association with reading stems from formal education, then course material or texts become the main reading materials associated with reading. Reading as a leisure activity will then be a distant prospect. This will not only hamper language acquisition but also the written and verbal skills that are necessary tools for facilitating formal education. The scarcity of libraries thus limits exposure to a variety of styles of writing. This is a predicament that the formal system does not address either.

THE STUDENT IN FORMAL OR IN DISTANCE EDUCATION IN AFRICA

The discrepancy over parity of esteem between the two delivery systems in education will continue to plague the education system in Africa. Both systems are under-resourced even though preference is always overwhelmingly shown by both parents and pupils for the traditional delivery mode because of its strong face-to-face element. Besides, the claim that distance education can be cheaper lends support to the mistaken view that it is also inferior. One is forced to conclude that the continuing lack of adequate financing of traditional education can only increase the spread of the use of distance education.

Most of the countries in Africa are still struggling to survive under pre-literate conditions, where the exposure to print is not only limited in quantity and quality but also in the range of material available. As a result the level of literary exposure is low. There is also little realisation that this scarcity imposes limits on the acquisition of reading skills and also has implications for national development. Further still, the absence of libraries to support formal education also widely impacts on resources available to support the distance learner. The link between distance education and cheapness having been made, the absence of books and other adequate resources to aid education generally becomes legitimised.

However, it is my view that it is possible for learning styles to evolve within a cultural environment which offers some compensatory strategies for a distance learner to follow, especially so where the society is predominantly oral in tradition. The author has shown elsewhere (John, 1979, 1984) that students in such societies are capable of developing a high level of retention and recall as strategies to overcome the scarcity of resources at their disposal. These papers also indicate how students equip themselves with the capacity to compensate for their under-exposure to linguistic styles and expression which are required to aid their development and understanding. It must also be pointed out, however, that whatever strategies are developed to counteract the absence of libraries and information service they do not replace the contributions and value that direct access affords. That view about libraries is also shared by university students in America where it is proposed that *if the providers of distance education ... are sincerely concerned with the educational experience and success of their students, they will provide a support services program, of which the core includes academic advising and library resources* (Knutson, 1994).

CONCLUSION

The emphasis of this paper has been restricted to student support in distance education at the secondary level in Africa. It is the lowest level in the education process at which a large-scale introduction is made of distance strategies for delivering education. To that extent, it forces a reassessment of traditional education in order to make an informed judgement of the qualities and pitfalls. The consideration of educational issues associated with instructional language and library provision is crucial whichever system is used to deliver instruction. For that reason alone any discussion about support at secondary level cannot overlook the level of commitment attached to the new system being proposed. If, as argued earlier, it also depends on existing structures for a quality service, then distance education cannot look to structures which do not exist. Rather, it would look, as I have tried to demonstrate, at educational and cultural strategies which have the potential to offer some support to the distance learner. As Jenkins also points out, *it seems that success* [of distance education] *depends largely on the resources available for the venture, and allocation of resources in turn depends on political commitment* (Jenkins, 1990). To that extent, distance educators and administrators would look to their providers for the:

- political commitment to ensure an effective distance mode system;
- resources within and outside the distance mode system; and
- training for the distance educators.

In turn, distance teaching institutions would be expected to develop a system whose end product for the student would go some way towards providing support of a high standard, incorporating communication links between the institution and student in terms of feedback on assignments, face-to-face sessions, broadcast media and library services. The total package of services would take into account a number of educational factors bordering on matters pedagogic, psychological, cultural and technological that would go towards enhancing the quality of the student's performance.

Given the scarcity of resources in English-speaking Africa to provide formal education generally, the issues raised regarding support for distance education provision on the continent reveal the scale of the task still to be undertaken. A cost-comparison exercise revealed a widening gap in educational provision between sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world (World Bank, 1988). The absence of books showed that educational materials account for just 1.1% of the recurrent primary education budget on instructional materials in median African countries (i.e.,(US)$0.60 per pupil per year). This sum is set against a much larger budget on instructional materials at the same educational level in developed countries (i.e., about 4 % which amounts to about (US)$100 per pupil per year). That difference, when set in context alongside other related factors, such as instructional language and staff training, can only widen the gap in quality of support structures available in distance education.

A more recent study strikes an even more pessimistic note when it states that *conditions are "catastrophic" for school-age children in many sub-Saharan African countries, with economic and other pressures driving the continent further away from its educational goals* (UNESCO, 1993).

The distance learner is generally regarded as being more highly motivated than is the case of a traditional student. That view may only hold good for an adult distance learner and not for one at the secondary school level. Educational issues outside the control of the distance learner for which little or no support is provided frustrate rather than motivate the student. On the other hand, an understanding of the cultural attributes which aid the learning/teaching process can lead to the development of policies to ameliorate the scarcity of resources that would affect negatively the quality of student support. Resources at the disposal of both the institution and student provide the environment that enhances quality of education and support. This can only improve with better resources and strong political commitment. Current trends of cooperation beyond national boundaries on the African continent are encouraging signs in that regard. In a situation where the quality of student support is already low, an awareness of the need for solutions to improve a poor service is an indication that there is room for improvement and some hope of achieving it.

In this regard, it is worth commenting on the role that international organisations are playing to enhance distance education in Africa, in terms of resource building through training, donation of essential equipment and the fostering of cooperative effort. Their involvement has led to South-South and North-South ventures that are manifestations of international support which could improve the quality of service on the continent. The facilitating role which such organisations mentioned earlier, COL, UNESCO, ICDE and ACCT play in Africa has led to the establishment of local international organisations such as Distance Education Association of Southern Africa and the West African Distance Education Association, which meet regularly to discuss ideas of mutual concern. What the future holds for joint projects within regional groupings in Africa such as the Southern African Development Council perhaps also points to the trend that will result in the production of good quality and reasonably priced educational materials. Joint ventures may help to reduce costs to the point where economies of scale can be achieved for savings to be allocated for other support schemes. However, only time will tell.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Canada. Council of Ministers of Education. (1993). The impact of information and communications technologies on post secondary education: report presented to CERI/OECD. Ottawa: Council of Ministers of Education. (Occasional Paper, 2.)

Chale, E.M. (1983). Teaching and training in Tanzania: an evaluation of primary school teachers in Tanzania following initial training as carried out in conventional teachers colleges and through an innovative approach of distance teaching. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Institute of Education, University of London.

Chivore, B.R.S. (1993). The Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course. In H. Perraton (Ed.) Distance education for teacher training. London: Routledge.

Costello, N. (1993). "Organisational cultures and distance learning." Open Learning 8, (2) 3-11.

Curran, C. and P. Murphy (1992). "Distance education at the second-level and for teacher education in six African countries." In P. Murphy and A. Zhiri (eds.) Distance education in Anglophone Africa: experience with secondary education and teacher training. Washington, D.C.: World Bank. EDI Development Policy Case Series. (Analytical Case Studies, 9.)

Dale, S. (1982). "The three L's – libraries, literature and learning." Teaching at a distance 22, 72-75.

Hawkridge, D. et al. (1982). "In-service teacher education in Kenya." In H. Perraton (ed.) Alternative routes to formal education: distance teaching for school equivalency. Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Jenkins, J. (1990). "Distance education and its potential for Africa as an educational alternative." In E.O. Okeem, (ed.) Education in Africa: search for realistic alternatives. London: Institute for African Alternatives, 1990. Proceedings of a Workshop held at the Institute for African Alternatives (IFAA).

— (1981). Materials for learning: how to teach adults at a distance. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Jevons, F. et al. (1987). The Southern Africa Distance Education Project. A proposal prepared for SADCC countries with support from the Commonwealth Secretariat. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

John, M. (1991). Africa: a survey of distance education, 1991. Paris: UNESCO. (New Papers in Higher Education 4.)

— (1984). "The language of formal education and the role of libraries in oral-traditional societies." International Library Review 16, 393-406.

— (1979). "Libraries in oral-traditional societies." International Library Review 11, 321-339.

Kinyanjui, P.E. (1992). "The organization of teacher training at a distance with particular reference to Kenya." In P. Murphy and A. Zhiri (eds.) Distance education in Anglophone Africa: experience with secondary education and teacher training. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank. EDI Development Policy Case Series, (Analytical Case Studies, 9)

Knutson, S.M. (1994). "Dual-mode post-secondary distance education support services: the student's perspective." In Conference Proceedings, Distance Learning Research Conference, San Antonio, Texas, April 27-29, 1994. College Station, Texas: Texas A & M University.

Lassa, P. (1983). "The National Teachers Institute (NTI)." In J. Greenland (ed.) The inservice training of primary school teachers in English-speaking Africa: a report. Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers.

Mkandawire, D.S.J. and D.R. Jere (1988). "Democratization of education through distance learning and problems of assessment with specific reference to Malawi." Studies in Educational Evaluation 14, (2) 139-146.

Perraton, H. (1982). "The scope of distance teaching." In H. Perraton (ed.) Alternative routes to formal education: distance teaching for school equivalency. Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Tucker, J. (1993). "Library services for the Open Learning Agency of Australia." In Jacob, C.J. (comp.) 6th Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Kansas City, Missouri. Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University Library.

— (1992). "Television Open Learning: implications for libraries." Libraries: the heart of the matter. Proceedings of the Australian Library and Information Association. 2nd. Biennial Conference. Deakin: D.W. Thorpe.

UNESCO (1993). World education report. Paris: Unesco Press. (Cited by Noonan, P. (1993) Continuing crisis in African education). Africa Recovery, United Nations, 7(3/4) December 1993-March 1994.

— (1990). Priority: Africa. Seminar on distance education, Arusha (Tanzania), 24-28 September 1990. Final report. Paris: Unesco.

Wilson, C.D. (1993). "Study centres: key to success of field dependent learners in Africa." In B. Scriven et al. (eds.) Distance education for the twenty-first century. Selected papers from the 16th World Conference of the International Council for Distance Education, Thailand, November, 1992. Brisbane: International Council for Distance Education and Queensland University of Technology.

World Bank (1988). Education in sub-Saharan Africa: policies for adjustment, revitalization, and expansion. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

PROVIDING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR THE EXTERNAL B.Ed. DISTANCE LEARNERS PROGRAMME AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

Judith W. Kamau

BACKGROUND

The establishment of the External Bachelor of Education Degree Programme at the University of Nairobi followed feasibility studies of 1976 and 1983 whose objectives were to determine the necessity and relevance of an external degree programme for Kenya.

In these two reports it was established that:

- there were large numbers of candidates who qualified for the internal programmes but due to a lack of residential space and academic facilities, it was not possible to enroll them in the existing conventional universities; and
- through the use of distance teaching methods an external degree programme would provide a cheaper method of making university education available to Kenyans in comparison to the conventional mode which requires expensive and extensive capital investment.

To facilitate the democratisation of university education as a means towards equality of educational opportunity for all who require and deserve it, the distance education mode of delivery or instruction was seen as the answer.

Through distance education the university would provide:

- learning materials that make university education available beyond lecture halls;
- an opportunity for people to learn at their own pace as opposed to conventional methods;
- an alternative and innovative method of learning that is accessible anywhere, anytime;
- the much needed high level manpower for the teaching profession;
- an opportunity to maximise the use of limited educational resources, both human and material;
- training for subject/content experts in writing and editing skills for distance education; and
- facilities to develop quality distance teaching materials for use in Kenya and beyond.

PROGRAMMES

The principal aims of the External B.Ed. programme was to increase the number of secondary school teachers as well as to improve the level of professional training of persons already in the system in the Arts and Sciences. Out of a total of 19,368 teachers, 8,648 were untrained and 5,706 were holders of the SI/Diploma[1] (University of Nairobi Task Force Committee Report, 1983). Consideration was also given to expand the programme to include degree programmes in Legal Studies, Business Studies, Bachelor of Education (Science) and the Post-graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) for graduates in Arts and Sciences who have no professional training in education. Currently, plans to launch B.Ed. (Science), the PGDE and Business Studies degree programmes are at an advanced planning stage. Additionally, preparations are being made to start writing study materials in preparation for the degree programme in Legal Studies.

---

[1] Secondary I Diploma is a post-secondary qualification.

The first programme which will accept students is the B.Ed. (Arts) degree with the following subject combinations:

- Double Mathematics
- Geography and Economics
- History and Religious Studies and Philosophy
- Kiswahili and Literature
- Mathematics and Business Studies
- Mathematics and Economics
- Geography and History
- English Language and Literature
- Business Studies and Economics
- Mathematics and Geography

In addition, each student takes Education which consists of the following broad areas:

- Foundations of Education
- Psychology of Education
- Curriculum Development, Planning and Administration
- Educational Communications and Technology

MODE OF DELIVERY: MAIN MEDIUM AND SUPPORT MEDIA

The teaching/learning system of the External Degree programme consists of three components namely:

- printed materials (texts);
- audio and videocassettes; and
- face-to-face tutorials.

The main teaching/learning process is through the study units covering individual subject units in the approved syllabi which are especially prepared by subject specialists. To enable the subject specialists to write for distance education, they are given an orientation in writing skills which covers:

- overview of distance education;
- characteristics of distance learners;
- writing measurable instructional objectives;
- developing module/unit outlines from a given syllabus;
- content presentation/format;
- language and style for distance education materials;
- providing active learning in the study units;
- visualisation, i.e., the role of illustrations in distance education;
- reviewing and pre-testing distance teaching materials; and
- the editorial process in the development of distance teaching/learning study materials.

The other teaching modalities are audio and videocassettes which serve as essential support components to the print medium. The audio and videocassettes are intended to introduce course materials, highlight important aspects in the subject area, provide concrete examples and discussions, address specialised areas such as sound demonstration in language, practical activities, provide academic tutorials and counselling services to the students. The use of audiovisual materials stresses the information given in the printed material in a unique way.

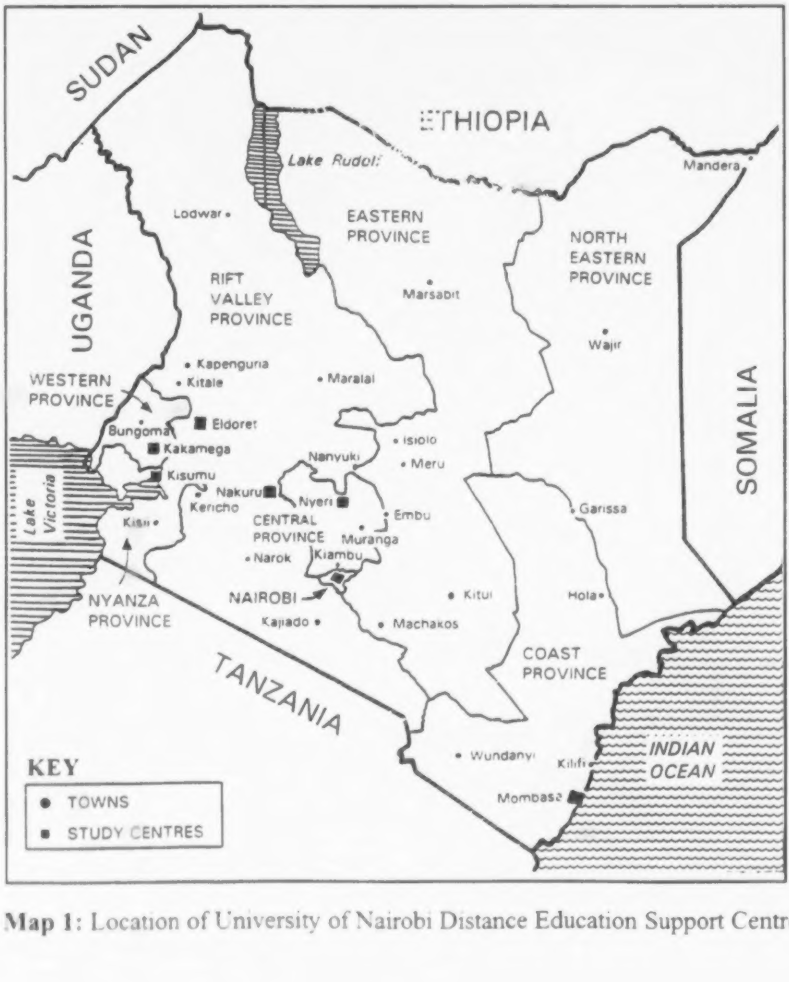
The third aspect of the teaching/learning support system is the face-to-face tutorial. These include residential sessions during which the writers of study materials, who are also subject specialists, introduce the study materials to the students, conduct revision exercises and give timed tests, which are a part of the learner assessment process. The residential face-to-face sessions are held in April, August and November/December each year, when the schools are in recess. The costs associated with the face-to-face sessions are shared. Students are responsible for their transportation and accommodation. The university meets the transportation and accommodation expenses of the tutors. A major constraint in sustaining monthly tutorials has been absenteeism by students in particular due to unreliable transportation. This situation tended to demoralise the tutors. As a result the tutorials were centralised and held at the University of Nairobi which is attended by the students four times a year, for about two weeks each time. Once a month face-to-face field tutorials are generally conducted at the study centres by resident lecturers and part-time staff. The organisation and supervision of the field tutorials are done by the extramural staff.

GEOGRAPHICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENT SUPPORT CENTRES

In order to administer the distance education programmes of the University of Nairobi satisfactorily, the country was divided into sections. The largest geographical unit is a province. For each province there is a provincial centre. In some instances, circumstances dictate that a particular provincial centre services more than one province, e.g., Mombasa serves both the North Eastern Province and the Coast Province. Each province comprises a number of districts. Study centres are located in each of the districts.

The location of study centres was guided by factors such as student population, availability of suitable tutors, availability and reliability of public transportation, halls of residence and other facilities needed for tutorials. The centre in Eldoret also caters to students from the northern part of the Rift Valley. There are no study centres in either the North Eastern or Eastern provinces. The sparse population, limited student

Kenya



Map 1: Location of University of Nairobi Distance Education Support Centres

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

numbers, and vast distances between centres of population are the primary reasons for not establishing centres in these regions. Map 1 indicates the geographical spread of University of Nairobi's distance education study centres. Table 1 provides registration statistics by provinces and districts.

REASONS FOR PROVIDING LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR EXTERNAL DEGREE STUDENTS

In comparison with students in conventional programmes external degree students are disadvantaged because:

- they study in **isolation** from their lecturers and their peers and thus are denied the full benefits
- of constant interaction with lecturers and students in their learning endeavours;
- they combine their studies with family responsibilities, occupational demands and wider community commitments. These responsibilities have been found to distract the students from their learning activities;
- reinforcement of their learning endeavours through prompt feedback does not compare favourably with the support given to residential students;
- they do not benefit from a concentration of learning resources (such as libraries) subsequently external students encounter study problems due to inadequate information resources. As a result, many distance students have underdeveloped study skills and often lack confidence in their approach to learning.

Thus for an external degree programme to succeed in producing quality graduates, these and other problems have to be squarely addressed. It is simply not enough to produce quality distance teaching materials for distance learners. Distribution of the study materials to students has to be regular and timely. Their isolation and other factors which impede their progress must be contemplated during the decision- making process for distance education courses. Thus a sub-system which provides student learning support services is an indispensable component of any good distance education system. The services of such a sub-system need to be located as close to the distance learners as possible, otherwise the learners may find it difficult to benefit from such services owing to financial constraints and inadequacy of time.

PROBLEMS FACED BY DISTANCE LEARNERS

Most external students experience a multiplicity of problems as a result of isolation from their tutors and fellow students. Thus it is necessary to organise guidance and counselling sessions at which learners can share information. These sessions assist them to combat problems related to learning at a distance. The problems are manifested in a number of ways:

Problems related to lack of clear information on:

- subject choices
- mode of delivery and what is expected of the students
- arrangements of tutorials and residential sessions
- procedures governing administration of assignments
- special requirements for individual subjects
- general regulations governing the courses

Problems affecting learning:

- unpunctuality, irregular or non-attendance at tutorial residential sessions
- poor time management
- lack of appropriate study skills
- failure to submit assignments or the late submission of assignments
- failure to take scheduled examinations
- poor writing skills
- poor and/or underdeveloped practical skills

Province	Number of Students by Province	Provincial Centres	Districts Covered	Number of Students by District
CENTRAL	118	NYERI	Kiambu	51
			Muranga	24
			Kirinyaga	22
			Nyeri	10
			Nyandarua	11
NAIROBI	116	NAIROBI	Nairobi	116
EASTERN	86		Machakos	21
			Kitui	14
			Meru	34
			Marsabit	-
			Embu	16
			Isiolo	1
NORTH EASTERN	2	MOMBASA	Wajir	-
			Garissa	1
			Mandera	1
COAST	20	MOMBASA	Tana River	2
			Mombasa	12
			Kilifi	1
			Lamu	-
			Kwale	-
			Taita/Taveta	5
RIFT VALLEY	125	NAKURU & ELDORET	Elego	
			Marakwet	4
			Nakuru	39
			West Pokot	3
			Kajiado	8
			Kericho	20
			Baringo	3
			Narok	2
			Turkana	-
			Trans-Nzoia	11
			Uasin-Gishu	11
			Laikipia	2
			Samburu	3
			Nandi	19
WESTERN	57	KAKAMEGA	Kakamega	36
			Bungoma	4
			Busia	17
NYANZA	72	KISUMU	Kisii	19
			S. Nyanza	16
			Kisumu	29
			Siaya	8
Total	596			596

Table 1. Registration statistics for student support centres by province and district

Problems related to physical separation:

- geographical isolation
- delayed feedback
- late delivery of materials
- family responsibilities
- social obligations and responsibilities
- work or occupational pressures

Problems related to psychological factors:

- diversions and distractions
- low motivation
- psychological withdrawal
- depression
- aggression
- stress – physical, emotional and mental

These problems can affect distance education programmes negatively through high attrition rates. Distance education must incorporate strategies to address these issues as a part of the delivery process.

The purpose of setting up support services is therefore to provide guidance and counselling services to students in order to:

- assist them to clarify their aims and aspirations;
- restore their self-confidence;
- enable them to make the right decisions and subject choices;
- guide them in making a smooth start;
- help them to understand the programme;
- aid them to develop self-reliance;
- facilitate them in making the best use of their physical separation;
- advise them on how to manage their time well;
- counsel them in organising their priorities to avoid any conflicts of interests;
- teach them to overcome their day-to-day crises;
- help them to sustain interest and motivation in their programme; and
- instruct programme organisers to identify and isolate student cases requiring specialised attention.

In the External Degree Programme these problems have been addressed by:

- sending information booklets to students prior to their joining the course;
- appointing tutors and/or counsellors to provide assistance on a regular basis;
- conducting induction and orientation sessions for students in their first residential sessions;
- addressing their initial difficulties in the programme; and by
- providing a students' handbook with detailed information about the programme and its mode of delivery.

The foregoing measures indicate that it is necessary to provide counselling and to share information in order to assist distance education students to combat the various problems which are associated with learning at a distance.

Pre-admission counselling, for example, exposes students to information on the relevant university regulations governing external courses, ensures that they know exactly what the programme entails in terms of study responsibilities, financial requirements as well as the other demands associated with their programme of study. These sessions also assist them to understand clearly the assessment and examination procedures. These activities will enable students to arrange their study time so that they can achieve certain specific goals within a prescribed period.

The other support services provided to distance learners are library services and book supply.

LIBRARY SERVICES AND BOOK SUPPLY

Rationale

Distance education at tertiary level is heavily dependent on printed materials. For this reason, writers of units for the B.Ed. (Arts) programme were asked from its inception to submit lists of required and supplementary reading materials. Items for required reading must be currently available on the market and be reasonably priced. The supplementary reading list is required to be quite extensive, as library facilities vary in different parts of the country and old titles are sometimes more available than new material.

Book purchase

The University of Kenya requires each distance education student to pay when registering, a cess (fee) of Kshs. 1,500.00[2] for the purchase of essential texts and other costs associated with their programme. This is necessary because very few book shops provide an efficient special order service and it is easier, quicker and cheaper to purchase books in bulk. The intention is to provide one textbook to accompany each unit. In practice however, some of the standard texts can be used for more than one unit and a unit covering multiple topics may require more than one text.

Some of the money paid by students was also used towards the cost of purchasing cassette tapes. Periodic reviews of this cess will accommodate price fluctuations.

Where adequate stocks are not available, the students are required to choose between two texts, for example between a book on Vector Analysis or one on Calculus. In order to broaden students' exposure when these instances occur it is hoped that students would exchange books among themselves. When it is not possible to procure a title before the examination date, this fact is taken into account during face-to-face teaching. Pressures of time, on occasion, have necessitated the procurement of a title because it was readily available, rather than waiting for the best choice.

Many students indicate that they would be prepared to purchase additional titles and request that they are advised in advance which books will be supplied by the programme so that they can budget accordingly.

Source of purchase

University regulations require that purchasing is done through the university book shop. Because of the protracted acquisition process delays are inevitable. But, more importantly, the foreign exchange regulation which requires purchasers to pay in advance for any purchase requiring foreign currency, adds an additional impediment. Also students are sometimes unable to meet their book installment payments which creates a cash flow difficulty for the university. As a result this service has been temporarily suspended until the book purchase scheme can be reorganised.

Library resources

University library services

Theoretically degree students are entitled to the same library facilities as other students of the University of Nairobi. However, this is only possible while they are actually on the campus. All students use the library resources during residential sessions and private visits to Nairobi. Owing to distance, however, many are rarely able to visit the libraries of the university during the school term. For students unable to visit the library easily an extended borrowing period, such as that granted to researchers in the provinces, would be of considerable assistance.

---

[2] The national currency is the Kenya shilling which is written as Kshs. The approximate exchange rate is 55.35Kshs = US$1. (as at September 1995).

In terms of the level of book stock purchased for courses and programmes, faculty members assume that the total population of students, by academic department, is taken into account when decisions are being made for purchases by the university library. The distribution of the book stock is another issue. For example, it would not be practical to place at the Kikuyu campus of the University of Nairobi materials needed to support areas of specialisation as most students would find it difficult to access this site. However, for their education courses the principal resources are at the Kikuyu campus and Kenyatta University. At Kenyatta University, students are allowed reference access but they are not given borrowing privileges. It would therefore be desirable for the main university library to provide the most important texts in education for these students, who are the only external degree students at the University of Nairobi.

Extramural centres

There is a long-term proposal to stock study centres with library books and other resources for external degree students. Where individual students cannot obtain enough books or where the cost of providing them would be prohibitive, reference copies have been sent to the study centres for external students to refer to or borrow. Such provision however, has been limited as students' book deposits can be used only for their individual copies. The availability of textbooks throughout the country in private and public collections may be seen as one of the spin-off benefits of the programme in the long term.

Other library services

External degree students are urged to make personal arrangements to exploit all library resources located near to them. Learning resource centres in Teacher Training Colleges (with a computerised interchange system), the Kenya National Library Service and its Branch Libraries, British Council Libraries, Theological College Libraries and the major school libraries are among those which can be approached. The Kenya National Library Service is provided with lists of recommended reference books but it is the requests from students on a constant basis which will signify the real public demand. Although there are no rights to demand cooperation from other libraries, several institutions, notably the Kagumo Teachers College near to the Nyeri study centre and Egerton near to Nakuru, have been most generous in offering assistance to external students.

CONCLUSION

Student support services are an important aspect of distance education and learning. Such services reduce considerably the factor of isolation which is the major concern of distance learners.

Face-to-face tutorials at the study centres reduce the effect of isolation. It must be recognised that the need and sometimes mandatory requirement to travel to the study centres is a source of strain, at many levels, for distance learners. One of the fundamental aims of distance education is to free learning of temporal and physical delimiters.

One of the advantages of having a developed and well organised library and information service is that access to these services does not necessarily have to involve travelling. Once the required infrastructure is in place books and information can be sent to students rather than students going to the source. This infrastructure includes appropriate titles in sufficient numbers, personnel to manage the service and the existence or development of mechanisms to facilitate the distribution and return (where necessary) of information within an acceptable time frame.

A significant decision, at the highest level, which would benefit not only Kenyan distance learners but also improve access to knowledge and information generally, would be a relaxation of the current foreign exchange regulations. The ability to easily acquire books from outside the country would greatly assist the development of libraries as well as be of considerable value at a personal level. An important effect is the incalculable positive contribution that a broad spectrum of readily available information that is up-to-date would make to national development.

The contribution that strong student support services make to the success of distance education programmes is well known. There is documented evidence to show that libraries are a critical component in the education process. It is, therefore, necessary to accord libraries and information services to distance learners with a similar recognition. Any activity that the Kenyan authorities make in this regard will benefit not only the individual distance learner, but it will also contribute to national development and enrich our society immeasurably.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Holmberg B. (1985). *Status and trends of distance education*. Sweden: Lector Publishing House.

Open University (1992). *Teaching for the Open University*. Milton Keynes: Open University.

Thorpe, Mary & David Grugeon (eds.) (1987). *Open learning for adults*. London: Longman.

University of Nairobi (1990). *A report to the Vice-Chancellor and Senate on the current status, progress and restructuring of the External Degree Programme*. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.

—— (1986). *Student handbook*. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.

—— (1987). *Tutor's handbook*. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.

—— (1983). *Task Force Committee: report*. Mimeograph.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND LIBRARIES IN DISTANCE EDUCATION: PRESENT AND FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR INDIA

Uma Kanjilil

INTRODUCTION

Information technology, or IT as it is commonly called, refers to those technologies and devices which facilitate efficient and effective communication. IT also allows us to access and handle with ease vast amounts of information. During the last 30 years, a number of major advances in the use of computers and communication technologies have occurred. These developments expedite access to mega computers which store large volumes of information. The catalyst in the widespread use of modern IT systems has been the availability of low cost micro electronic machines which provide a powerful yet economical means of accessing and processing information. IT has penetrated all spheres of professional and personal life. Education, and in particular distance education, is not and cannot be immune from the influence of IT.

Distance education as a system to provide learning opportunities has been in existence for a considerable period of time. Historical studies reveal that formalised distance education programmes date from the last century. Within the last 25 years, distance education as a system of learning has attracted the attention of many institutions and individuals in both national and international fora. During this period of heightened interest, there have been many changes within the discipline, especially regarding its management, pedagogy and accessibility. The April 1995 International Centre for Distance Learning (ICDL) CD-ROM database on distance education indicates that there are 835 distance teaching institutions offering 29,166 courses located in almost 100 countries.

Several nomenclatures are used to describe this system of education. In Australia it is known as the External System, in France as Télé-enseignment, and in Germany Fernun Terricht. In India it is usually referred to as Correspondence Education. While a variety of definitions are used to describe distance education the following characteristics are common to all of these definitions. They are the:

- separation of teacher and learner ;
- individualisation of learning;
- preparation and provision of learning materials; and
- establishing and using various communication channels to link tutor and student.

The principal aims of distance education are to:

- provide educational opportunities to the masses;
- raise the general level of education;
- serve as an alternative to the formal system of education; and
- provide educational opportunities for those who were unable to access conventional education.

The worldwide communications revolution has led to the development of high-speed computers with huge storage capacities. Additionally, the availability of electronic and telecommunication technologies at reasonable prices have created a tremendous impact on almost all human activities, including education. The characteristics of distance education encourage the use of modern IT.

A principal goal of modern day distance education courses is to motivate students. The design of the self-instructional packages that students receive is firmly rooted in that aim. Therefore, the services of a well-equipped and efficient library which is conveniently accessible is regarded as being very important to the success of the academic progress of students. Given the important role that IT can play in making information more readily available, it is necessary to include a consideration of IT in any reflection on distance library services. Merging IT with library and information services to distance learners enhances the delivery of such services.

The development of modern-day distance education programmes requires the work of a large and diverse pool of professional talents. Course preparation is a costly and time-consuming exercise. However, once a course is available it can be used by a large number of students at significantly lower per capita costs than conventional education strategies. This makes distance education particularly appealing to planners and governments who need to provide educational opportunities for rapidly increasing populations in cash-strapped economies.

APPLICATION OF IT IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

The ongoing developments in computer and telecommunication technologies occasion tremendous changes in the activities of the distance education institutions in administrative procedures, instructional delivery, and other functions.

Both IT and education work with the same product – knowledge – but for different goals. While IT allows for faster and more comprehensive access to information, education seeks to ensure the better comprehension and assimilation of knowledge. IT and education therefore appear to be "made for each other."

Central to the concept of distance education is the separation of teacher from the learner. This separation requires that communication between instructor and student takes place in some way other than by direct speech. IT therefore appears to be an ideal channel of communication as it uses various interconnecting media – technical or otherwise – to unite the teacher and the learner and to convey the content of the course.

IT can be deployed in two different but related aspects of distance education. IT can be used to deliver the context of instruction as well as documents. Instructional TV, video and audio cassettes, teleconferencing, computer-aided instruction, interactive video discs and videographic systems are some of the potential components of instructional delivery to which IT can be applied.

The application of IT to document delivery places at "the stroke of a finger" the wealth of information available – regardless of habitat. Advancements in computer and telecommunication technologies have enabled a growth in distance learning opportunities for students in homes, schools, colleges, and the workplace. According to Garrison (1985) the development of distance education can be structured into three generations of technological innovations:

- correspondence;
- teleconferencing; and
- computers.

Correspondence education was a major shift from the traditional face-to-face interaction and it provided freedom to choose where and what to study. Teleconferencing technology dramatically overcame the slow interaction process associated with correspondence study and it is frequently used as a communicating medium in distance teaching. Computers have brought about new possibilities in distance education through computer-assisted learning (CAL) and computer-assisted instruction (CAI). CAL and CAI help students to study at a distance independently as well as to experience immediate interaction with their peers and tutors.

While IT offers tremendous advantages to distance education on its own, the use of other technological aids for distance education should not be disregarded. These are audiovisual materials such as audio and videocassettes, radio and television broadcasting, video discs etc. Sometimes these media can be used in association with IT to great effect. The telephone is also frequently used in distance teaching as an interactive medium.

Distance teaching requires technologies that are cheap, reliable, easy to use, multifunctional and easily accessible to the majority. This limits the integration of some technologies into distance education systems. For example, good quality CAL or CAI and interactive video discs are expensive to produce. Television, radio, audio and videocassette players, and microcomputers are some of the media that are commonly available in homes in developed countries. While there are other technologies their impact on the distance teaching process is limited. These include viewdata and telefax. In addition, some of the technologies listed above such as teleconferencing and cyclopes are not particularly suitable for home study purposes because of their technological requirements.

The use of technology in developing countries such as India is not widespread. Several reasons account for this. Firstly, technological development in developing or Third World countries is not as advanced as it is in the developed world. Secondly, the infrastructure to support the deployment of technology is not always readily available or reliable. Thirdly, although costs are lessening, the capital costs to provide the necessary infrastructure, at the national level, is often beyond the economic capabilities of many of these countries. Fourthly, while the cost of individual equipment is getting lower, for many Third World people the ability to purchase such equipment is beyond their financial means. And fifthly, not all Third World countries possess the cadre of trained personnel which are required to optimise the presentation of information in electronic formats. Despite these recognised difficulties, many Third World countries are making concerted efforts to use IT, especially where it can enhance the delivery of distance education.

IT AND LIBRARIES IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Each new technological development that takes place impacts on libraries and information centres. IT has affected most of the routine operations of library and information services such as circulation and cataloguing services. These include a reduction in the time required to carry out routine tasks; the opportunity to improve record keeping procedures and the ability to link intra- and inter-library activities in unprecedented ways. IT enables the integrative nature of library services to be actualised, eliminating the need for traditional departments such as acquisitions and cataloguing as it allows these activities to be executed from the same workstation.

In many libraries IT-based services which enrich the access routes to information such as CD-ROM and online searching facilities are now commonplace. Thus, on a growing basis, IT-aware clientele are expecting such services to be readily available. IT has changed the focus of library routines from technical activities and procedures to client-oriented services. IT has also changed the mission and goals of library and information centres. The emphasis has shifted from the mere custody of a document to accessing and exploiting information, whatever its form and wherever it is available. As a result, user-oriented services have gained greater importance in library and information sciences. These professions are no longer limited to collection building and other technical activities. Cooperation, inter-lending and document delivery facilitated by telecommunication links are very important aspects of the work of today's information providers.

Computer-assisted retrieval is now a common phenomenon. Electronic micrographics, electro-magnetic and electronic video-based systems are gaining ground as carriers of information in libraries. The convergence of technologies has given rise to an interchange between various forms and types of information products and services. For example, the convergence of computer and micrographics technologies provides us with the computer-based microfiche catalogues. IT can also be used to assist in the retrieval of information from databases held in other microforms. The convergence of computers with telecommunications facilitates online searching via networks. And finally, the convergence of optical disk technology with computer-assisted retrieval is enhancing the use of databanks. All of these will impact significantly on the delivery of library services to distance learners.

The significance of the impact of IT for library and information services lies in the reconfiguration of existing services, the creation of entirely new services and the integration of services in ways previously unknown. Because of IT library and information centres are gradually expanding their role by functioning as publishers, database producers, and online hosts with the appropriate application of technologies viz., electronic publishing, E-mail and networking.

Technology can play a key role in a distance education library system. Two important areas of support to this system are:

- access to information; and the
- delivery of information.

Libraries in distance teaching institutions, therefore, should try to convert all their bibliographic records to computer readable formats in order to provide remote students with access to their collections and services through an online facility. IT can solve a number of problems associated with studying at a distance. Online access to computerised catalogues not only provides access to the local library's database, but also to the remote databases and catalogues of other libraries through national and international gateways.

But providing bibliographic information about a document is only the beginning of library and information services. Access to the actual document or the information stored therein is the ultimate requirement of the client. The distance between the library and the student adds a facet to the delivery of distance library services that traditional library and information services do not have to consider. The use of IT to access databases that provide full text information can solve this problem to a great extent. Other technologies that can help considerably in the document delivery process include E-mail and fax. Journal articles can be easily transmitted by these technologies. However, for books the traditional methods of dispatch must continue to be used until full text digital transmission is practicable and copyright regulations permit.

The use of multi-media packages in instructional delivery requires that these resources and their associated technologies are easily accessible to distance learners. Thus, in addition to providing books, libraries have a vital role in providing multi-media resources to support distance education. The availability of a well-equipped media centre for distance learners is therefore essential if all modern technological innovations are to be exploited to their fullest. The integration of print and non-print resources to support the library and information needs of distance learners is important. The resources of such a service would include in-house and commercially produced multi-media learning packages.

In addition to providing the multi-media packages libraries must also take the steps necessary to ensure that these materials are utilised to the maximum. Bibliographic multi-media instruction for distance learners is therefore an important task that distance librarians have to perform.

THE INDIAN SCENARIO

Distance education systems – university-level systems

In addition to the 40 Correspondence Directorates in India there are two types of distance teaching institutions that provide university-level education. These are dual-mode universities and open universities. The five open universities are divided into two categories – national and state. The national open university is the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in New Delhi.

The state open universities are:

- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (formerly known as Andhra Pradesh Open University) in Andhra Pradesh;
- Kota Open University in Rajasthan;
- Nalanda Open University in Bihar; and
- Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University in Maharashtra.

Enrollment in correspondence courses and the open universities at the end of the Seventh Five Year Plan (1987 – 91) was approximately 500,000 students. During the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992 – 97) enrollment in higher level educational institutions is estimated to reach 1,000,000 of which 50 % are expected to be registered at distance education institutions (India. Planning Commission. 1992).

IT in India

The information technology revolution started in India in the 1980s. Microcomputers were introduced in the government and private sectors to facilitate railway reservations and office automation activities*inter alia*. Over time other technologies such as telefacsimile, teletext and videotext were also introduced. The establishment of a satellite television system has helped to bridge the physical distances between urban, rural and remote areas.

Under the Seventh Five Year Plan the introduction of new technologies such as the digital switching systems, digital microwave, coaxial and optical fibre for long distance transmission, multi-access rural radio systems in rural networks etc., were important accomplishments.

The aim of the Eighth Five Year Plan is to provide a range of value-added services such as cellular mobile services, voice and electronic mail services, audio and video conferencing services, radio paging and videotext.

INSAT, the national satellite communications system, represents India's first step towards implementing a space system for articulated national needs. The multi-purpose INSAT system caters to domestic long-distance telecommunication, meteorological observation and data relay, nationwide direct satellite TV broadcasting as well as nationwide radio and TV programme distribution for rebroadcasting through terrestrial transmitters from various locations. The launch and operation of INSAT satellites 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D and 2E are envisaged during the Eighth Five Year Plan. Additionally, GRAMSAT satellites, low earth orbiting communication and mobile satellite systems, are also to be introduced. In addition to conventional use, these satellite systems have a considerable potential to support distance education, and its library services in particular.

In networking, several important initiatives were made during the Seventh Five Year Plan. Data networks such as NICNET (for government departments) and INDONET (for public and commercial use) became operational. Information networks such as DELNET (for the libraries of New Delhi and CALIBNET (for the libraries of Calcutta) were implemented. Networks such as INFLIBNET (for all the university and specialised research and development institution libraries), DESINET (for defence science laboratories), SIRNET (for the laboratories of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) were also conceived. Under the ERNET project, scientific and industrial institutions were connected through E-mail. With the establishment of the gateway system in Bombay, and the digital facilities between the major cities, users in India can now get easy access to databases outside the country.

While the development of IT in India is past the nascent state there is still considerable developmental and enhancement work to be done. What is required is the utilisation of these technologies by distance education institutions to strengthen the learning process of distance learners. The National Policy on Education (1986) stressed the need for the use of media and other educational technologies so that the most distant and deprived section of the population can have access to education. In India, the instructional system of the open universities is quite different from that in the conventional universities. Open universities have adopted a multi-media approach in instruction delivery, utilising different media such as self-instructional study materials, audio and videocassettes, radio and television broadcasting and counselling sessions. The use of audiovisual materials is quite common in the open universities. For example, IGNOU has produced over 390 video and 530 audio programmes for its courses of study. These audio programmes are broadcast by selected stations of All India Radio around the country. Half hour slots are provided thrice weekly on the National Network for video programmes.

IGNOU, with the cooperation of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), has installed an audio teleconferencing facility which connects the headquarters of the university with its regional centres and the other open universities in the country. This facility however, is in its experimental stage of development and will take some time to be fully operational. Another important experiment conducted recently was the cable TV interactive network system at the Modasa Study Centre. In this experiment, the educational programmes of IGNOU were distributed through a cable TV network. Regular telephone lines are used to provide an audio link that supports student/counsellor interaction: this is another role in which technology is used for distance education purposes. The experience gained through these experiments and other activities will go a long way in developing satellite-based interactive systems for the distance education process in India.

A look at the library services provided by the spectrum of distance teaching institutions in India indicates that such services at the Correspondence Directorates are negligible. On the other hand open universities have established libraries at their headquarters, regional and study centre facilities. The basic services provided by the open universities are reference services and listening to and viewing audio and video cassettes. Some sites have a photocopying facility. The ability to network IGNOU's regional and study centres as well as the other open universities with the main library at IGNOU would be a useful development and is eagerly anticipated.

Overall, progress in the automation of the library system of the open universities is limited. To date, IGNOU has made the greatest strides in this regard. The library at the headquarters of IGNOU has procured a multi-user PC486 system with 16 terminals. The 16 terminals are to be installed in various divisions of the library and also at various schools of studies making a local area network. In order to support the automation of the system it has acquired a UNIX-based library software package produced by the LYBSYS corporation in New Delhi. The library has also purchased a CD-ROM drive and has subscribed to some important databases, e.g., *LISA, ERIC, Social Sciences Index, Books in Print* and *Whitaker's Book Bank*. The International Centre for Distance Learning donates its database on distance education. IGNOU's library is also a member of DELNET and INFLIBNET which are University Grants Commission (UGC) projects. These memberships have made access to the information of and resources in other libraries in the country possible. E-mail is also available. All these facilities at IGNOU are in their fledgling stage and it will take some time for them to be fully operational.

The intent to increase higher education enrollments, especially in the open universities, will increase substantially the need for reading materials and library services. One implication of this development is a need to expand the resources provided for all aspects of library and information services. Increased student numbers without a concomitant increase in library and information provision may reduce the overall level of access to library materials and services. Supply will not be able to satisfy an ever-increasing demand. Already considerable pressure exists to support such needs, as the constantly rising prices of books and periodicals are making it difficult for libraries to cope with demands. Faced with such a predicament, it may be difficult for the libraries to be fully effective unless alternative arrangements are instituted to access information.

IT can play a vital role in solving such difficulties. Once the system is in place and students have access to the services that the system can provide, it will no longer be necessary to have all multiple dedicated library and information facilities around the country. Through the use of electronic and telecommunications devices limited resources can be used to supply the demands of a large clientele.

India has already made progress in its IT development and application. In order to make the distance education system successful in India, such technologies should be utilised to the fullest for both instructional and document delivery. Cost-effective technologies such as fax should be used to greater advantage. The widening of the E-mail network for document delivery should also be undertaken. The use of such strategies will not only extend the availability of library services to the dispersed population of students, distance and conventional, but also ultimately it will be cost effective.

CONCLUSION

It is essential that all technologies are systematically adopted in the educational process, especially in distance education which caters to vast populations. The libraries of the distance teaching institutions in India are not yet properly equipped to incorporate some of these technologies which can enhance the quality of their functions. IGNOU's placement at the apex of distance teaching institutions in India enables it to play a leading role in the provision of guidance to other institutions in the use of technology in distance education. A well-developed library and information service at all Indian distance teaching institutions will strengthen the distance education process. The availability of well planned library and information services to support distance education will also ensure that distance learners will enjoy the opportunity to pursue a learning programme of quality.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Garrison, D. R. (1985). "Three generations of technological innovations." *Distance education 6,* (2) 235-241.

India. Ministry of Human Resource Development. Department of Education (1986). *National Policy on education 1986: programme of action.* New Delhi: Ministry of Human Resource Development Department of Education.

India. Planning Commission. (1992). *Eighth Five Year Plan 1992-97.* New Delhi: Planning Commission.

International Centre for Distance Learning (April, 1995). *CD-ROM database on distance teaching institutions.* Milton Keynes: ICDL.

Kanjilal, Uma (In press). *Multimedia resource centres: role of libraries in distance education.* Paper presented at the 13th Annual Convention of Society for Information Science (India) held at INSDOC, New Delhi on 27th-29th January, 1994.

OVERCOMING THE TYRANNY OF DISTANCE

David Meacham and Margaret H. Macpherson

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is not dissimilar to many other commodities, insofar as its consumers want everything, everywhere, all the time, and at little or no cost. In this context any library must fail to achieve the ideal, as it will only ever be able to supply some things at some times to some clients at some cost.

To understand the shortfall of provision when the ideal is compared with the reality, it is instructive to consider the existing library provisions of a major distance education provider in Australia, and how they relate to more general provision in Australia, and then to discuss emerging issues and possible future developments. It is hoped that whilst the resources and context will differ in various parts of the Commonwealth, the essential issues will be recognisable throughout, enabling readers to relate their own environment to the examples provided.

EXISTING PROVISION AT CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

Clients and context

Charles Sturt University (CSU) is a medium-sized Australian university situated on three campuses in western New South Wales (NSW). It offers courses in both the on-campus and distance education mode. It also has several satellite study centres serving particular subjects such as policing or ambulance services. The university was formed in 1990 by the amalgamation of two pre-existing Colleges of Advanced Education, and consequently has a strong teaching and vocational tradition.

A wide range of courses is offered from the faculties of Arts; Commerce; Education; Health Studies; Science and Agriculture.

CSU has about 14,000 students of whom over half are studying at a distance, making only occasional visits to the University. The majority of the students are mature entrants, seeking to further their careers and qualifications, through undergraduate courses.

Available resources

The library at CSU has an operating budget of about (US) $4 million per annum. It has at least one million items, comprising *inter alia*: 500,000 books; 350,000 periodical issues and 150,000 audiovisual items. There is a staff of 80, located on three campuses, each with officers dedicated to distance education provision. The collection is housed in purpose-built accommodation, with air conditioning. The library has an integrated, computerised system which supports acquisitions, catalogues and loans.

This system is connected with other university libraries in NSW via Unilinc, a company established by tertiary education institutions for library services cooperation. It was formerly known as CLANN.

Services provided

The following services are provided for distance education students:

Loans

Most material may be borrowed for two weeks with one renewal;

Returns

University pays forward mailing costs, students pay for return of items;

Photocopies

To comply with Australian copyright legislation, each request must have a signed declaration and request to photocopy form; to comply with the Act, no more than 10% or one chapter of a book, and generally only one article from a single issue of a periodical may be copied for the purpose of private study; normally there is no charge for photocopies supplied by mail, but charges may be made for large amounts or for facsimile transmission;

Information and reference services

Literature searches providing lists of citations are provided to enable students to access materials in the university or other libraries;

Contact

Students can request library services by phone, facsimile, post or E-mail. Toll-free phones and after-hours answering facilities are provided;

Use of other libraries

All tertiary institutions in Australia allow use of the collections within their library and a high proportion enroll distance education students as reciprocal borrowers. Students may also register at a variety of public and even private libraries. However, conditions of use, eligibility and charges vary widely and very few of these libraries offer a postal service for distance education students. Students living in New South Wales may borrow from libraries in the Unilinc network and from TAFE (Technical and Further Education College) libraries, as well as some university libraries;

Reciprocal arrangements

Three university libraries which offer distance education support (CSU, South Australia and Deakin) have agreed to extend reciprocal access to remote students and not just to those able to make personal library visits. Periodical articles, if not available at the home library, are supplied directly to the student from another participating library.

Rationale

Equity of provision for all students is the goal. However, given finite resources, the study schedules imposed by a rigid semester system and the diverse locations and domestic and professional situations of students make this difficult to achieve in practice.

The services provided attempt to compensate for the inability of many students to use the library in person. Decisions about the introduction of specific services are based on their generic utility and widespread accessibility. Thus, priority is given to new services that can be accessed by the majority of students, in relation to their major functional needs. For example toll-free telephone access has been given a high priority because students have almost universal access to telephones. In contrast E-mail is not yet used by the community at large.

THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

Cooperation with other university libraries

Crocker (1984) indicates that the two major disadvantages that external students experience are the inability to browse in an academic library to make original selections of reading material and a lack of education in library usage. Elsewhere Grimison (1988) suggests the educative aspects as well as access problems could be addressed by a much more widespread and systematic system of reciprocal provision. In 1984, Crocker was of the opinion that the many distance education students domiciled in major population centres should be given full services and privileges at their nearest academic library and not treated as intruders. Exclusion would result in a decline or the non-acquisition of library research skills. Four years later Crocker (1988) saw the situation as improving, but confusing, with rules for reciprocal borrowing and participating institutions constantly changing. In this context, it is noteworthy that the Crocker, Cameron and Farish (1987) report to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission –*A national library card for external students* – rejected the concept embodied in the title but did recommend standards for the provision of library services to distance education students.

Since these articles were written, the major form of cooperation which benefits distance education students has been reciprocal borrowing, which allows students free access to libraries other than those at their home institution. This valuable service, widely practised in other states of Australia, is being questioned by some university libraries in NSW who seek payment on a fee-for-service basis. The emerging climate of economic rationalism encourages collaboration for financial return rather than cooperation for the benefit of individual students. In economic terms, metropolitan universities with few distance education students perceive themselves as donors in reciprocal agreements. In fact, studies undertaken in university libraries in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth show cross-usage by internal students being more considerable than that of distance education students. In order to accommodate the demands of a reciprocal loan system, Radford (1988) suggests that reciprocal arrangements be restricted to academic staff and postgraduate students, as the demands of undergraduate students from other institutions may render the libraries of some universities ineffective for their own undergraduate populations. Such views are typical of many librarians in the 1980s, as indicated in the 1981 Proceedings of a National Workshop on Library Services in Distance Education. Many people were of the view that it was dishonest to recruit external students who would need to go to the libraries of other institutions to have some of their learning needs satisfied.

The debate surrounding these issues is well summed up in the 1990 National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET) Commissioned Report, No. 7 entitled *Library provision in higher education institutions* which states the following:

- *The objections raised to the introduction of unrestricted borrowing by all higher education students, comes principally from the larger libraries, with the most comprehensive and possibly the most valuable holdings, which foresee that they will become the libraries of choice for an excessive number of external student borrowers, that their reference staff will be overloaded, their own students disadvantaged...*
- Nevertheless attitudes towards direct borrowing by non-institutional users have changed a great deal over the last twenty years. The reasons for this shift include initiatives by library managers; the focus on library cooperation at all levels; greater mobility of students; and more assertive students.
- *The attitudinal shift favouring direct borrowing access has also been reinforced by reciprocal borrowing experience fostered in New South Wales by CLANN, in Victoria by CAVAL, and in Western Australia by the higher education libraries themselves.*
- *The considerable experience of this direct borrowing is that: the floodgate did not open...; there is not a significant problem with defaulting borrowers; it does not result in disadvantage for the institution's own clientele; and there is rarely competition for identical resources.* (NBEET, 1990)

Standards of library provision

The NBEET report (1990) suggests that about 25% of the 48,000 distance education students in higher education are genuinely or extraordinarily remote, and for this group standards of library provision should be set. The report goes as far as saying that *some institutions teaching externally have tacitly avoided their responsibility and have failed to make proper provision for library service to their distance education students ....*

This view is in stark contrast to the philosophy of provision espoused by (British) Open University (OU) which simply assumes that its students can rely on the public library system, other university libraries, or booksellers. In making this contrast, the generally much higher quality of learning materials and student support provided by the OU must be recognised.

A number of Australian university libraries provide online access to catalogues of the student's own and other universities for distance education students who have access to a compatible personal computer and modem. However, use of the collections may only be possible as a consequence of a personal visit, a situation satisfactory for students living in large urban centres, and that paradoxically applies to the majority of distance education students in Australian universities, but still leaves a significant level of unsatisfied demand.

Cooperation with public and private libraries and archives

Grosser and Bagnell (1989) have investigated external students use of public libraries and concluded *inter alia* that external students make limited use of their own university libraries; rural distance education students can make less use of local libraries than their urban counterparts; in most public libraries students are the single largest user group; and that public libraries have not been, but *should be*, funded to support the academic needs of distance learners.

National communications initiatives

The Australian Academic and Research Network (AARNet), which facilitates electronic transmission within the Australian community, also allows access to the Internet. University libraries have been quick to use these facilities to access information and to begin training staff and students in the use of the network.

Scholarly communication will increasingly occur by electronic means and libraries must provide skilled advice and intermediary services to encourage this development.

KEY ISSUES

Equity, efficiency and effectiveness

CSU is making increasing demands of efficiency on its service providers, including the university library. In this regard it has been singularly successful, being recognised by the Department of Employment, Education and Training as the most efficient university in Australia. Unfortunately this judgement is based on the university's ability to produce graduates with fewer resources than its competitors.

CSU is also being asked to provide an effective service to a demanding, fairly inaccessible clientele, who show great variation in their ability to access electronic media and in their ability to pay for any services provided.

This is an important issue as effective and equitable provision is expected for all distance students. There should be parity of provision between on-campus and off-campus students, as there is no distinction made between their awards on the basis of mode of study, with students generally doing the same assignments, marked to the same standards.

There is widespread community acceptance of parity of esteem between degrees offered by on- and off-campus study, with distance education students obtaining scholarships and prestigious awards such as the University Medal. Therefore it is essential that the library continues to supply an effective service to enable the potential disadvantages of off-campus students to be minimised.

This problem is being exacerbated with the increase in distance education courses at the master's level. As Bynner (1986) points out, master's students require not only prescribed books and articles but access to bibliographic searches as a route to the collections of other libraries. The increased demand by external master's students on libraries has been well documented by Winter and Cameron (1983), with the demand increasing since their investigation. Unless a university provides a comprehensive library service for its postgraduate distance education students, they will have difficulty in completing studies of a comparable standard when compared with those undertaking such studies in a conventional mode. The answer lies in extensive provision of library services to remote students using suitable technologies, augmenting service from the home library with personal access to a cooperating network of libraries.

There is a growing trend in Australia to increase the financial contributions required of students for university education. This is reflected in an emerging fee-for-service philosophy, and tendency to transfer costs from the university to individual students. This creates equity problems when examined in terms of fairness and parity of award.

Information rich and information poor

The emerging developments in information technology that relate to library provision have the potential for greatly increased access at reduced recurrent costs. E-mail is cheaper than conventional mail, and visual display unit (VDU) presentation is undoubtedly cheaper than printing.

However, the uses of such systems require students to make an individual investment in a personal computer and generally pay the carrier (telephone) charge for access to the university. In most cases students will also wish to purchase a printer, which, although it will probably give an inferior reproduction of an original, is infinitely preferable to reading major works of literature on a computer screen. Thus there is a potential for less wealthy students of the university to be denied access to information, but on a wider scale whole societies and even countries will be denied access to information if a prerequisite is the financial ability to purchase a personal computer. Even those with adequate finances may not be computer literate and may lack the confidence to obtain library access via an unfamiliar medium.

In addition to technology-related problems of differential access, Grimison (1988) identifies lack of reader education for distance education students. He maintains that external students are less aware of services available, being unable to participate in effective reader education programmes during the early parts of their study. Grimison points out that whilst reader education for internal students is well established in Australian universities, provision for external students is less effective, and suggests that reciprocal borrowing arrangements with other libraries could be extended to include reader education programmes. Under this proposal distance education students would receive their library education at a library near their home rather than at their home institution.

Given that external students are of mature age, unfamiliarity with the workings of both computer and library systems is likely to exist. Additionally, many of than may not have studied for many years, so there is considerable potential for the value of the educational experience to be significantly diminished unless appropriate instruction is given in electronic communication and its use in accessing information services. Research with on-campus students has indicated that in academic libraries holding 90% of the items needed by students, students are only successful in accessing between 40% and 50% of their requirements, because of user failure at the catalogue access stage. The figures for external students are almost certainly worse, highlighting a great need for reader education and clearly illustrating that, for many students, provision of services without adequate reader education does not constitute access. Information literacy should be part of general education.

Copyright and access

The current Copyright Act in Australia is an amended version of the 1968 Act. In the 1980 amendment, Section 53B(9) made special reference to distance education students, recognizing that they have less than equitable access to the literature, whilst also taking into account the commercial requirements of the publishers. The latest amendment to the Act (1993) has no specific reference to distance education, but permits all students for individual study purposes to copy *insubstantial portions*, i.e., less than one page; one chapter or 10% of a book, and one article from one issue of a journal. For these privileges, the university pays a per capita levy to the Copyright Agency Limited, who reimburses it to the copyright holders. This system allows the university (working within the above guidelines) to provide books of readings (i.e., photocopied material) to distance education students. The intent of these books of readings is to reduce

139

their reliance on library borrowings. In addition to the readings, each student is provided with a list of references, which may be accessed through library services. This provides the student with a core of information, whilst encouraging the development of research skills and a personal store of knowledge.

As Moore (1987) indicates with reference to the amendment of 1980, the Act enables the distance teacher to remedy deficiencies in resources that distance students may otherwise find insurmountable. It allows distance education students equitable access with their on-campus peers and reduces the demand on library provision by providing essential learning resources as individual copies. The statutory licensing arrangement also relieves teachers and their employers of the threat of legal action. This arrangement has recently been simplified for all parties by estimating fees due for copyright on a per capita basis, rather than on the periodic examination of comprehensive records of materials copied.

It can be said that copyright legislation in Australia and university practice takes into account the special needs of distance education students whilst ensuring fair dealing, without which the book market would be seriously undermined.

Costs and benefits

All libraries incur costs in providing benefits for students and staff. The provision of services and resources to external students is potentially very costly, especially when delivery charges are taken into consideration. In order to keep costs down to reasonable levels, critical decisions must be made about the number and variety of holdings, the chosen delivery mechanism, the breadth of services offered, and whether or not the user pays. At CSU material and advice are freely provided, freight to the student is covered although they must meet return freight charges and toll-free phones are in place to support distance services. This policy is typical of most Australian institutions providing higher education at a distance.

Optimising technology

In all operations there is an optimum level of technology, but this level is highly unstable, varying with time and resources. Many technological applications are highly effective for on-campus students or even dispersed centres. However when it comes down to servicing individual students in their homes, the technology must be commonly available, reasonably priced, easy to use and extremely reliable. A recent report by Geissinger (1994) indicates that although many students have computers, they often do not have modems or communications software, also they may have obsolete computers which are much less user-friendly, in terms of electronic access.

As a consequence of this, CSU has only encouraged electronic access on a piecemeal basis, largely focussed in discipline areas that attract students who are computer literate, and who may be required to purchase a computer as a condition of enrollment. Such groups of students are generally limited in size. They also benefit from support and encouragement by an academic with specific interests and competencies in this field.

CSU has put in place E-mail paths that potentially allow any student to communicate effectively and economically; any student, that is, who has the time, the money and the competence.

The current system is much more effective in receiving requests than supplying the data required. Despite the claims of CD-ROM advocates, there is still relatively little use of dial-up access to CD-ROM databases. The reasons for this are obliquely identified by Van Dyk (1992), who describes ROMOTE an off-campus dial-up service for CD-ROM databases, which has been introduced for students of Monash University, Gippsland. The service was introduced as a consequence of student demand to have direct database access and to accelerate text provision, by reducing search time for library staff. It also has the desirable effect of making students more independent learners. However, the number of students having access facilities is limited, and although database access in terms of catalogues and abstracts may be facilitated, students have to subsequently obtain the actual articles or works.

Van Dyk (1992) describes the challenge of finding appropriate remote communications software that was powerful, robust, cheap, and able to run on student's PCs of variable, but often limited, capacity. The problem of locking into a minimum standards specification in a rapidly evolving market is also identified. All such systems need a maintenance and renewal strategy which is often neglected, when the introduction of technology is perceived as an event rather than a process. In this particular instance, commercial software was too expensive for students; as a result an in-house communications software was developed, with cost advantages, but performance and support limitations.

ROMOTE is still in its operational testing stage and subject to significant restraints including licensing agreements for remote multiple access to single copies of commercial databases, down time and client information about access problems and lack of ability to accommodate increased usage.

Telereplica, the chosen remote communication system, cannot reserve times for users, operate a queuing system or cut off users after a specified time. Such problems illustrate what economists term the Fallacy of Aggregation, whereby what can be accommodated on a small scale cannot be expanded to a mass scale without systemic changes. Until such issues are addressed, remote access seems likely to have more trials than a High Court judge and more pilots than a national airline.

At CSU optimum use CD-ROM technology is taking longer to achieve than was expected, although it should be accelerated with the introduction of a standardised and updated communications system, and the expectation that all students wishing to use it will have access to hardware of acceptable specification.

Criteria of effectiveness

Australian universities and their libraries are developing quality assurance processes. While statistics for loans, purchases and items catalogued have long been available, serious efforts are being made to assess effectiveness. CAUL, the Council of Australian University Librarians, is developing performance measures relating to user satisfaction, availability of materials and responsiveness of document delivery service.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Maticka (1992) sees the main challenges for library provision for distance education students as involving harnessing the technology, resource sharing and the commercialisation of distance education.

Distance education in Australia has generally taken a low technology, cost-effective approach. Learning resources are predominantly print-based with supplementary reading materials being supplied directly to the students. These are cheaply produced offprints provided within the regulations of the Copyright Act. However, with increasing government commitment to the use of electronic communications systems in higher education, direct electronic access to text rather than just catalogue information is emerging. The establishment of the AARNet opens up the possibility of low-cost access by external students to a range of computer-based services provided by universities including online catalogues and electronic mail, and even online material access where the material has been stored in electronic form. There has been much said about CD-ROM database access, but this provision on a large scale to all students in all subject areas has yet to be realised for distance education students in Australia, largely due to hardware and software licensing costs.

Maticka (1992) sees the reciprocal borrowing debate of the 1980s as having receded in importance with the amalgamations and rationalisations of higher education institutions, which were precipitated by the government. Hopefully the times which Cameron (1988) describes as being *not unusual for other institutions to treat external students enrolled elsewhere as if they were devils, lepers or even AIDS victims* have passed.

Funding cuts and relaxed regulations have encouraged Australian universities to look for new sources of income through offering distance education courses on a fee paying basis. This is generally at the postgraduate level, with the notable exceptions being OLAA and courses offered to offshore students.

These initiatives present great challenges in terms of library provision, as some of the postgraduate students pay considerable fees and expect a very high level of service, whilst the OLAA students who are often poorly prepared for study at university level are expected to survive with a minimum of support, as few services can be provided within the inadequate fee structure. In many instances, the fees generated are only directed in very small part to the library, which is in effect subsidising fee-generating activities.

Maticka (1992) is of the view that the greatest challenge of the next decade is that of defining the role of the library in the education of external students. Although communications technology holds great promise for increased access to collections and services, there is a trend towards self-contained learning packages, which require no library access whatsoever. This may be cost effective, but is it university education, if there is no opportunity to access individual resources upon which to base a personal synthesis of contemporary ideas? Also the trend towards open learning is attracting more students from non-traditional backgrounds and other cultures. There is little in the literature to suggest that their library needs have been the subject of special consideration.

CONCLUSION

Since the rapid development of distance education at the higher education level in the late 1970s, considerable measures have been taken to ensure appropriate library provision for distance education students. The most significant initiatives include dial-up catalogue access, postal delivery, toll-free phone services, facsimile transmissions and the move to electronic delivery of information.

Future developments involve the assessment and implementation of appropriate widely accepted technologies, the extension of remote access to information services and the encouragement of the electronic highway as an essential tool for all students. The debate concerning fee versus free library services must be settled. Information literacy is vital.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Australia. National Board for Employment, Education and Training. (1990). *Library provision in higher education institutions.* Commissioned Report no. 7. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Services.

Bynner, J. (1986). "Masters teaching in education by distance methods." *Distance Education 7,* (1) 23-37.

Cameron, M. (1988). "A full long spoon." *Australian Academic and Research Libraries 19,* (4) 223-228.

Crocker, C. (1988). "Meeting the information needs of external students." *Australian Academic and Research Libraries 19,* (3) 129-139.

— (1984). "Library services to external students: a shared responsibility." *Australasian College Libraries 2*, (1) 32-39.

Crocker, C., M. Cameron and S. Farish (1987). *A national library card for external students? An investigation into a possible system of borrowing privileges for all external students at all tertiary libraries*. A report commissioned by the [Australian] Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission. Geelong: Deakin University.

Geissinger, H. (1994). "CSU distance students' attitudes toward computer use." *Occasional Papers in Open and Distance Learning 15*, 5-9.

Grimison, C. (1988). "Reader education for external students." *Australasian College Libraries 6*, (2/3) 43-49.

Grosser, K. and G. Bagnell (1989). "External students and public libraries: student perspectives." *The Australian Library Journal 38*, (4) 303-317.

Maticka, M. (1992). "Distance education and libraries." In C. Steele (ed.) *Australian Tertiary Libraries Issues for the 1990s*. Adelaide: Auslib Press.

Moore, L. (1987). "The Australian law of copyright and its application to distance education." *Distance Education 8*, 18-37.

Radford, N. (1988). "A university view of cooperative borrowing." *Australian Academic and Research Libraries 19*, (3) 140-144.

Van Dyk, M. T. (1992). "ROMOTE: an off-campus dial-up service for CD-ROM databases." *LASIE 22*,(5) 148-155.

Winter, A. and M. Cameron (1983). *External students and their libraries*. Geelong: Deakin University.

LIBRARY SERVICES FOR THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA: EXPERIENCES OF THE FIRST YEAR

Geoffrey R. V. Mmari

INTRODUCTION

The Open University of Tanzania (OUT) was established by an Act of Parliament on December 4, 1992, United Republic of Tanzania (URT) (1992) and became operational on March 1, 1993, URT (1993). The unveiling of a plaque by His Excellency Federico Mayor the Director-General of UNESCO on July 26, 1993, signalled the commencement of work at the OUT. Registration of students began on January 19, 1994.

Four degree programmes were offered, *viz* B.A., B.Com., B.A. with Education and B.Com. with Education with a total enrollment of 766 students. Subjects covered in the degree programmes are Business Studies, Economics, English Language and Linguistics, Education, Literature in English, Geography, History, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Philosophy and Religious Studies.

Apart from study materials purchased from the University of Nairobi in the subjects listed, the university refers students to other titles on the study materials list as additional and enriching reading.

ACQUISITION OF LIBRARY BOOKS AND JOURNALS

With a limited overall budget of (US)$10,000 during 1990/91, (US)$40,000 during 1991/92 and (US)$282,000 during 1992/93, plus an expected income from student fees of (US) $158,000, the university was unable to set aside more than a token sum for the library. From the very beginning it has adopted survival strategies tried elsewhere.

It was decided that the university would not establish a separate university library in the initial years. As a consequence of this policy, the university would build on existing stocks of books, journals and other facilities in already existing library systems, public and private.

The stock of books and journals held by existing library systems was limited in quantity and scope to support degree level programmes. The OUT decided that it would approach traditional donors to libraries, especially those in developed countries, for university-level materials to augment those already in existence. OUT has been able to acquire a substantial stock of library books and journals through various sources.

Outright purchase

In spite of limited budgetary allocations, it has been possible to purchase books required most urgently by students. Most of these are prescribed texts as well as those listed as required further reading. Money to purchase these books has come from government subventions, fees paid by students and cash grants from donor agencies. Of the three sources, the one that is assured on a sustainable basis are fees paid by the students.

Book donations

One category of book donors supplied discipline-specific titles, e.g., books on distance education. The British Council, The Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the Overseas Development Agency (ODA) and the Commonwealth Secretariat were primary donors in this group. While the books received from these sources were few in number, their content was relevant to the needs of the academic staff, course writers, programme coordinators and students of distance education.

The second category of book donors were those who had experience in collecting books from universities for use in other university libraries. Most of these books were multidisciplinary in scope, but varied in content level and physical condition. In this category of donors were charitable organisations and foundations in the United States of America and United Kingdom. Thousands of volumes of books and journals have been received from these donors.

Some of the books received from these donors were in subjects that OUT does not offer and they were given to the libraries of institutions where they would be useful. A good example is a large collection of medical books and journals that were received. They were sent to the Medical Library of the Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences, a constituent college of the University of Dar es Salaam.

As the University of Dar es Salaam had a similar experience, it was decided to constitute a National Committee to coordinate the distribution of books donated from abroad. The present Chairperson is the Director of Library Services at the University of Dar es Salaam and the committee has members from the University Libraries, the United States Information Service and the National News Agency.

Donations of other library items

The university has received audio cassettes with recorded articles from professional and scientific journals. Also received are collections of other journals and collected works. The audio cassettes received varied in relevance to the needs of the university. For example, some months ago a consignment of audio journals with articles on cardiology was received. These were sent to the Medical Library. Collected works in law are sent to the Ministry of Justice for use in the High Court libraries.

EXISTING STOCK OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

The largest network of library materials is held by the Tanzania Library Services Board. The Board was first established by an Act of Parliament in 1963, as the Tanganyika Library Services Board (TLS). The 1963 act was repealed in 1975. The Tanzania Library Services Board Act, 1975 has a fairly broad mandate. According to this Act, the TLS provides services aimed at fulfilling the following objectives:

- to provide all Tanzanians with access to documents and information, in all spheres of life, and all sectors of the national economy;
- to meet the reading needs of all people in Tanzania by providing books, periodicals, newspapers and magazines;
- to control, preserve and stimulate growth of the nation's literary output;
- to put at the disposal of the people of Tanzania the world's accumulated knowledge for purposes of education, research, socio-economic and cultural development;
- to develop an integral library and documentation system in Tanzania which will serve the people better and at a minimum cost; and
- to strengthen and develop the library and information science profession in Tanzania so that it can make an effective contribution to the development of society.

Services provided by the TLS include lending services for home reading at the National Central Library, regional, district and village libraries. According to the TLS Newssheet, bulk loans are offered to institutions such as government departments, schools, community centres, prisons, industries, etc. Small libraries in institutions, according to the Newssheet, may also make use of this service.

Apart from the lending services, the TLS also provides reference and reading facilities, documentation and information, bibliographic services and user services.

It is to this network that OUT has pegged its library function for its students. There are currently 13 regional libraries, 8 district libraries and 2 divisional libraries. University students may use these facilities on becoming members of the libraries. There are regional centres which do not have regional libraries and in such cases, the OUT makes arrangements with other institutional libraries for service to its students. For example, Dodoma has no regional library run by TLS. After a survey of those that exist, it was decided to use the College of Business Education Library for university students living in that region.

Many problems arose. One of these is the need for an incentive package for the TLS librarians who are prepared to serve the needs of OUT students. An honorarium is paid to those persons. Another problem is related to the facilities in existing libraries. To accommodate adequately existing demands, as well as the new demands imposed on the network by OUT, a considerable amount of rehabilitation of the libraries is necessary.

It has been determined that these problems are not beyond solution. A system which is heavily dependent on central government financing faces many challenges. For example, there is need to provide facilities where there are none and to improve on those which exist. In today's world the solution of existing problems often require the application of alternative strategies. This approach has been used to good effect in Tanzania. In a number of situations already there are signs that changes have been taking place when responsible people were challenged to consider alternatives. There is also a need to consider how private sector libraries can best be used to satisfy some of the library and information requirements of distance students.

Another stock of library books and facilities exist at other tertiary level institutions. There are two public universities, a constituent University College and several institutions which offer training at the post-secondary school level. The University of Dar es Salaam library has been in existence for over three decades and has important collections acquired from individuals, the government and the private sector, in all disciplines. The collection of the library at the University of Dar es Salaam covers all of the courses taught by OUT. While no formal agreements have yet been made between the two universities, in the spirit of inter-library loan arrangements, this rich resource is accessible to the OUT community, until such time as the OUT has its own resources.

Through the benefaction of UNESCO, the OUT has recently taken possession of a computer system. In addition to providing desk top services, this system also has a CD-ROM unit which obviates the need to go to the University of Dar es Salaam for this service. Prior to receipt of this system the OUT has to take its CD-ROM ICDL discs to the University of Dar es Salaam library for viewing and print-outs.

The third stock of suitable library books and journals is found in the cultural agencies of foreign nations based in Tanzania. One such agency is the British Council (BC) which was established in 1951. One of the aims of the BC is to promote cultural relations between Britain and Tanzania and to contribute to the development of Tanzania's cultural, educational and human resources.

Staff and students at the OUT have access to the BC library and may, on becoming members, borrow books or videocassettes. This applies also to students resident up-country whose membership is often endorsed by the university. Membership is not free but once the fee is paid, it gives staff and students access to the collection of this library.

Recently, through arrangements between the BC Library and the OUT, it has been possible to access videocassettes made by the (British) Open University and other producers. The BC buys the cassettes and stocks them in the library. The format is VHS PAL and covers a wide range of subjects, e.g., Management, Finance, Training, Health, Safety, Education, English Language Teaching, Wildlife, Conservation, Ecology, Sport, Agriculture and Science. A BC library is also being established in Pemba Island in Zanzibar.

The United States Information Service Library (USIS) extends membership to staff and students of the OUT. Membership is free and allows access to books, journals, videocassettes, CD-ROM facilities and the viewing of feature films on video. Both the BC and USIS libraries are located in Dar es Salaam which makes them inaccessible on a regular basis to students resident up-country.

The fourth stock of books is to be found in specialised libraries of government ministries, parastatal organisations, research institutes, theological institutions and cultural centres.

Because these collections exist in different parts of the country, they are not accessible to all the students equally. It is expected that through the initiatives and cooperation of the university librarians (when appointed), the regional coordinators, university staff and students, good working relationships can be developed with the existing libraries so that students can make the best use of all of the existing resources. A recent survey in Dodoma showed that there are no less than five libraries within proximity of the municipality. These are the Parliamentary Library, the Geological Services Library, the Political Party Head Office Library, the Institute for Rural Development Planning Library and the College of Business Education Library. These libraries, in addition to the school libraries, have some basic but useful books. Some of the municipalities and towns have libraries. They vary considerably both in terms of the stock held and in the calibre (professional training) of the staff who work in them. Some libraries are located where there is a good reading culture while others are not. The existing infrastructure can be used as the basis for future services for distance learners. The Tanzania Library Services Board does not yet have a library in Dodoma although this city has been designated to become the capital of Tanzania.

OTHER MEDIA AVAILABLE IN LIBRARIES

As previously indicated, some libraries have facilities that include videocassettes, CD-ROM and computers; some have photocopiers and printing facilities; some have special rooms for viewing films and videocassettes; some have microfiche and some have computers with terminals.

All these are important support services for distance learning. What is necessary is to make information available on what is where, whether they can be accessed, at what price etc.

Audio journals are useful only if they also have listening devices and a quiet space in which the listening can be done. The point that many researchers have made is that good media selection depends on local factors being taken into account. This observation is useful not only in relation to teaching and learning but also in the context of library facilities. When electricity is not available or where it is erratic, electricity-dependent services are affected. Where facilities are available but personnel to operate them are untrained or undertrained, such facilities are of little value to distance learners.

Some libraries have audiovisual materials that are produced locally while others rely totally on imported titles. The regionally produced titles use expertise which is already in the country. For example, arrangements are being made to make scientific videocassettes based on experiences at the Institute of Marine Sciences in Zanzibar available for OUT students. The Institute is a part of the University of Dar es Salaam and has links with the Memorial University of Newfoundland. OUT purchases materials which are produced by Kenya's Faculty of External Degree Studies which is a part of the College of Adult and Distance Education. These programmes include both print and nonprint materials. The audio cassettes are produced to complement the printed materials. For example, the audio cassette programme for the Study of English Part III, Unit BLL 204 presents the following information: side one contains Exercises Part I and II, and side two covers weak forms and varieties of English. Materials available in this format covers many subjects relevant to education as well as to other disciplines including the natural sciences.

Also available in the OUT library are audiovisual materials from the British Open University, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and the Commonwealth of Learning in Vancouver, Canada. Printed materials have been collected from the Andra Pradesh Open University (India), IGNOU, the Spanish Open University (UNED) and the National Distance Education University of Spain. These materials which are produced by sister institutions occupy a very special and valuable place in our library as they are written and produced by people and institutions with a similar approach to education. Many of these materials serve as useful specimen copies for our writers and producers. These materials, supported by a wide range of staff development activities and experiences, are important steps in the building endeavours pursued for the development of the OUT's library facilities.

The computerisation and computer linkage between the libraries of existing universities made possible through the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation (SAREC) is another information source that is useful to the OUT.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

To meet the needs of the distance learners scattered throughout Tanzania, the network of library services coordinated by the TLS Board will have to be strengthened. At the OUT the academic level of the collection must be suited to the particular needs of its distance learners. Also to be considered is the recruitment of adequate numbers of professional and non-professional staff to support distance services. The present scheme whereby the Open University of Tanzania pays an honorarium to the TLS library staff will have to be continued in order to maintain their morale. Employing its own staff would lead to unnecessary expenses both wasteful and unproductive.

Regional centres located in regions without TLS facilities will have to rely on both private and public libraries until the TLS puts up such facilities. But even when it does, collaboration between library systems will need to be continued and strengthened.

Given the expanding technological devices that have proved useful for distance learners, libraries will need to institute them within their budgetary abilities. Those now in place at the USIS library and the British Council show that a library can collect the various media, provided there is proper management.

It appears that there are organisations whose services could be tapped to assist distance learners, provided library managers know about them and provided they are willing to take the initiative to contact them. There is need to coordinate these efforts such as establishing and strengthening the committee which oversees the coordination of the distribution of books donated from overseas.

The International Campus Book Link (ICBL), a project supported by Barclays Bank and the Ranfurly Library Service (now Book Aid International), are good examples of "a project aiming to provide a coordinated scheme of book and periodical donations from British universities, polytechnics, colleges and private donors to universities in Africa" as stated in a promotional leaflet. The International Book Bank (IBB) co-ordinated through the USIS, the BC, the Canadian Organization of Development through Education (CODE) and the Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) based at the Theoretical Centre in Physics at Trieste, Italy are examples of groups which could help national library systems in the service of the distance learner.

There are individuals, firms and civic organisations within the Third World which can, in their own way assist, provided there is adequate sensitisation and public relations activities. They also need to be assured by the Treasury that their donations could merit tax exemptions as is the case in some developed nations.

Ours is a very short and limited experience. There are those with wider and richer experiences in handling library services for distance learners. We hope to learn from such experiences through regular publications and through databases such as that held by the ICDL at the British Open University.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Tanzania Library Services Board (1994). *Annual Report 1993 – 1994*. Dar es Salaam. [Tanzania Library Services Board].

United Republic of Tanzania (1993). *The Open University Act (Commencement) Notice, 1993*. Notice No. 55. Dar es Salaam: Government Printer.

—— (1992). *The Open University of Tanzania Act 1992*. Dar es Salaam: Government Printer.

—— (1975). *Tanzania Library Services Board Act No. 6 of 1975*. Dar es Salaam: Government Printer.

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION: THE IGNOU EXPERIENCE[1]

R. Satyanarayana

INTRODUCTION

Distance education has grown phenomenally over the last 10 to 15 years. In addition, distance education has become so integrated into standard education systems that when thinking of how education can be imparted one is longer restricted to thinking of traditional face-to-face contact only (Keegan, 1986). The theory of distance education has become a highly developed and complex discipline in its own right. Holmberg's (1986) *Growth and structure of distance education* draws attention to some of the important theorists of distance education The work of these theories is also discussed in *Distance education: international perspectives* (Sewart, Keegan and Holmberg, 1983). A question that has concerned these researchers is whether distance education is merely a vehicle of distribution or a system of education in its own right, worthy and capable of description and analysis. Their contributions make it clear that despite the fact that distance education is a methodology (i.e., a practical process) it is important and necessary for its protagonists to examine background theoretical issues.

Sewart, Keegan and Holmberg (1983) express the need for theories on the discipline of distance education when they recommend that a firmly based distance education will be one which can provide the touchstone against which political, financial, educational and social decisions can be taken with confidence. This would replace *ad hoc* applications which would occur if distance education is used as a problem-solving approach to a crisis situation. Sewart, Keegan and Holmberg's recommendation is sound and pragmatic, thus it deserves consideration whenever distance education course is being created and established. This view also demonstrates convincingly why theory is not an optional extra but a necessary activity whenever any discussion about distance education occurs.

An important issue within the discipline that needs standardisation is the terminology and meaning of the term distance education. Keegan (1986) devotes an entire chapter to this question in his book *The foundations of distance education*. Faibisoff (1987) examines this question in the first article of an issue of the *Journal of education for library and information science*. Zingerell's (1984) definition that *distance education is a form of instruction characterised by the physical separation of teacher from student, except for the occasional face-to-face meeting allowed for by some projects* is accepted by many and covers the major differences between distance and conventional education. Zingerell further points out that distance education differs from correspondence education in that it pre-supposes opportunities for student interaction, whether live or mediated, as well as student independence. Also provided by Zingerell is a distinction between distance education and distance learning, the former being the process whereas the latter focusses on the receiving of distance education.

---

[1] IGNOU is the international acronym for the Indira Ghandi National Open University in New Delhi, India.

Faibisoff's (1987) article extracts from the many definitions the following four common characteristics which are the essential qualities of distance education. They are that distance education:

- provides occasional interaction with faculty;
- provides for student independence and individual study;
- is delivered through courses both on- and off-campus; and
- is based on student needs.

Highlighted as being even more pertinent is the important implication that distance requires students to accept responsibility for being successful in their programme of study and that they should not depend on the presence of an authoritarian professional educator.

The pros and cons of choosing distance education are reported on by many authors. The Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ACACE) (1983) in *Distance learning and adult students: a review of recent developments in the public sector* offers rationales for and against the use of distance learning. From the students' perspective, ACACE suggests that a positive aspect of distance education is that it frees them from being tied to a fixed schedule to attend an institution; it does not require their traveling to and from the institution of instruction; and it frees them from the emotional and intellectual dependence on a teacher and also from peer pressure. Suggested as negative factors are the lack of verbal and non-verbal teacher cues which assist in the assimilation and understanding of new ideas and skills; the lack of stimuli and reinforcement from teachers and other students and also that distance education materials may be too rigid thus prohibiting the creation of critical independence; and the limited access to resources and facilities which can be to the disadvantage of distance learners.

Having placed distance education in context this article describes the experience of delivering library and information science programmes through distance education by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATION IN INDIA

Library science education has been available in India for more than 50 years. During this period, library science education has moved from the traditional mix of on-the-job training and part-time courses conducted and examined by professional associations to bachelor's and master's degree programmes offered by universities and other institutions of higher education and learning. Some of the universities also offer Ph.D. programmes. A novel development occurred when the Andhra Pradesh Open University (APOU) now known as the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU) began to offer library and information science at the bachelor's level via distance education.

The experiment was a great success. However, it was only available to persons who lived in that state of Andhra Pradesh. Persons who were employed in libraries throughout the country demanded that they be given similar opportunities. As a result, IGNOU launched its bachelor's degree programme in library and information science. The justification for starting this programme was that the courses conducted by other universities are mostly full-time and therefore not accessible to a majority of employed people. In the initial stages IGNOU had to examine questions which related to whether disciplines such as library and information sciences, which are essentially practice-based, could be taught through distance methodologies. However, the success of similar programmes in Sri Lanka and Andhra Pradesh prompted IGNOU to launch its B.LI.Sc. programme in library and information science. The experience of the last five years in running this programme and the feedback given from those who have successfully completed it confirms that this development was a good one. It has also contributed to the popularisation of distance education in India.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMME IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (B.LI.Sc.)

The aim of the B.LI.Sc. programme is to train professionals for middle level managerial and operational positions. People in these grades form the bulk of the manpower force usually found in different types of libraries. Areas covered by the B.LI.Sc. programme include skills development in operational routines, supervision and control of daily activities and a clear understanding of the basic role of libraries and information systems. The specific objectives of this programme are to:

- provide opportunities for professional development to those persons employed in libraries but who are not professionally qualified to hold technical positions. As a result they are either under-employed and/or unable to be promoted; and to
- develop professional standards in teaching practice-oriented technical subjects through the distance mode of education and thereby contribute to manpower development opportunities in library and information science in India.

Curriculum design

An expert committee was constituted by IGNOU to design a suitable curriculum for the B.LI.Sc. programme. The committee was comprised of professional library and information science educators as well as practising library managers and administrators.

The expert committee opined that the syllabi followed by most universities and other conventional trainers of professional librarians was somewhat heavily oriented towards traditional library skills such as cataloguing and classification. The general consensus of the committee was that this emphasis did not meet the growing need to have computer-based information-handling skills such as information management which are needed to support the types of client-based services that many libraries are now offering. It was also felt that another deficiency in traditional programmes was the lack of exposure to marketing skills which many employers expected recent graduates to have. Recognising these views as important, the expert committee formulated the curriculum for the B.LI.Sc. programme. A determined effort was made to incorporate contemporary developments in the discipline in the design of the curriculum.

Programme structure

Nine courses constitute the B.LI.Sc. programme. Of these, seven are devoted to theoretical principles pertaining to different areas of the discipline, which two courses provide practical exposure to areas such as cataloguing and classification. The specific structure of the programme follows IGNOU's course design structure. This ensures uniformity in administrative arrangements. The terms adopted by IGNOU for its course structure are programme, course, block and unit. At IGNOU each term has a specific meaning, e.g., unit is always the lowest self-contained component of a programme. The following is a list of the theoretical areas covered by the programme:

- Library and society
- Library management
- Library classification
- Library cataloguing
- Bibliography and reference work
- Information services and organisation
- Computer basics and applications

Cataloguing and classification are covered in practical courses. The practical components of the computer basics and applications course are integrated into the theoretical course, and work experience with computers will be provided through demonstrations of software packages such as CDS/ISIS.

Course teams and preparation of course materials

The (British) Open University adopted the innovative "course team" approach to the development of distance education courses. This model has been followed by many distance education institutions throughout the world. IGNOU also uses this approach for all of its programmes. Each course has its own course team which is led by a course coordinator who is responsible for course development. Also contributing to the development of a course are the course writers of the different units, editors and print and nonprint production personnel.

Many distance education institutions adopt a multi-media approach to deliver courses relying on a suitable mix of appropriate communication technologies for instruction. In the case of IGNOU, each programme consists of a number of courses and each course has several blocks of printed material and a number of audio cassettes and videotapes. All of this material is combined to form learning packages for IGNOU's B.LI.Sc. programme to which many eminent scholars and capable educators in the profession have contributed.

Good technology-based instructional courses and programmes are the result of the combination and cooperation of many persons with a range of talents. The formation of good distance education teams depends not only on academic contributions but also on the input of many others skills including course writers, graphic designers and media personnel such as directors of audio and video programmes, the services of computer laboratories and animation studios. To support these needs IGNOU has developed the capacity to provide these services.

Admission requirements

To be admitted to the B.LI.Sc. degree the candidate:

- must be a graduate of any recognised university; and
- should be employed in a library and should possess at least two years' experience.

The time allotted to complete a B.LI.Sc. degree is a minimum of one year and a maximum of four years.

Programme delivery

Several IGNOU divisions are involved in the delivery of the B.LI.Sc. programme:

- The Printing and Production Division (PPD). This division is responsible for the production of all print materials associated with the course. These include course materials, programme and admission guides and the different types of assignments (e.g., computer marked assignments (CMAs) and tutor marked assignments (TMAs)).
- The Communications Division. This division, in collaboration with faculty members, is responsible for the production of audio and video programmes. This division is staffed by qualified and trained personnel.
- The Materials Distribution Division (MDD). This division has the task of distributing the course materials according to the dispatch schedule suggested by the faculty.
- The Regional Services Division (RSD). This division appoints counsellors (on the advice and recommendation of the faculty) for the different areas of the discipline and also implements the delivery of the B.LI.Sc. programme. The RSD functions through a network of regional centres and study centres.

Each IGNOU programme is offered at a fixed number of study centres spread across the country. The B.LI.Sc. programme is offered at 30 SCs. The SCs are located in organisations which have the resources required to support the delivery of the B.LI.Sc. programme. IGNOU's policy is to optimise its access to all local resources as well as to avoid unnecessary duplication. Course counsellors are chosen, wherever possible, from expertise that is locally available. Each SC has a coordinator who monitors all aspects of the implementation of the course and who interacts with students through the SC counsellors. Students' performance reports are sent to IGNOU headquarters in New Delhi by the SC coordinator. Counselling sessions and face-to-face interaction between students and counsellors is awarded with 10%

of the credit time allocated to a course. The counselling sessions are conducted at each SC. Students are given prior notice of these activities. The audio and video programmes associated with the learning packages are telecast on the national television network three days a week. Each SC is equipped with a TV, VCR and audio cassette player. Students are allowed to view the video programmes at the SC to which they are attached. The SCs also provide limited library facilities to students.

Evaluation and examination

Student evaluation and examination

Student performance is evaluated and examined in two ways. The first is through the marking of assignments. This course has one CMA and two TMAs. These assignments are the continuous assessment aspect of the course. The second evaluation component is the completion of an answer script which is submitted at the end of the terminal (annual) examination. The final grade is determined on the following basis: 30% for continuous assessment and 70% for the terminal examination. Two marking schemes are used – grades and numerical. The grading system is divided as follows:

A	Excellent
B	Very good
C	Good
D	Satisfactory
E	Unsatisfactory

The numerical scale is out of a possible 100. To qualify for a degree, a student has to obtain a minimum grade of D in each course with an overall average of C. In the numerical system a minimum of 35% in each course and an overall average of 40% is required. Candidates receiving between 40% and 49% are awarded a Pass Degree. Candidates obtaining marks between 50% and 59% and 60% and over will be awarded 2nd and 1st Class degrees respectively.

Programme evaluation

The B.LI.Sc. programme has been offered since 1989. Mullick and Mullick (1994) conducted a tracer study of B.LI.Sc. graduates of IGNOU. The objectives of the study were to investigate the quality of the programme with respect to the following issues:

- design (syllabus and curriculum);
- study materials;
- delivery of study materials;
- student support services;
- continuous assessment; and the
- terminal examination.

The study also attempted to identify any problems related to the recognition of this degree by other universities. It also solicited, from those who had been successful, suggestions on ways that the programme could be improved.

The findings were interesting and encouraging. The majority of respondents indicated that the course was a very useful one and that it should be continued by the university. Some useful suggestions on how the course could be improved were given.

THE M.LI.Sc. DEGREE AT IGNOU

Presently 44 universities in India offer a master's degree in library and information science. As each university accepts only about 25 students each year, the overall intake is between 800 and 900 students annually. This number of places does not match the number of students who wish to pursue library and information science studies at this level. In addition, several manpower studies have suggested that there is a need for higher level trained manpower in libraries. The central and several state governments have prescribed that a master's degree is a requisite qualification for appointment at senior levels in libraries. In addition, the University Grants Commission has stated that for posts at the level of Professional Assistant and above in universities the minimum qualification required is a master's.

Recognising that there could be a market for a master's degree programme in library and information science, IGNOU decided to explore the feasibility of offering this degree. Several reasons contributed to IGNOU's decision to offer a master's in library and information science. Among the reasons were that

- a master's was necessary for certain appointments in libraries, especially in universities;
- the fact that admission to the established courses was difficult;
- the fact that many persons who wished to take this degree were already employed and that their employers were reluctant to grant the necessary leave to them to study on a full-time basis; and
- the experience and expertise acquired from running the B.LI.Sc. were strong motivators in the development of a master's degree programme in library and information science at a distance.

Objectives and scope

Master's degree level training prepares persons to hold higher level managerial positions and be able to contribute to the prestige of the profession, its reputation and individuals. Persons with training at this level would be able to provide professional leadership, plan activities and programmes for information institutions and execute them and monitor their operations. Training at this level would provide exposure to a range of user needs and requirements, enabling them to design and develop innovative user services. At an individual level, training at the master's level would contribute to professional development.

The M.LI.Sc. programme consists of eight courses, six of which are core courses covering information areas, the management of library and information centres and information technology. There are two electives designed to impart specialised skills whether in particular libraries or selected areas of the discipline.

Curriculum design

A team approach was also used for the development of the curriculum and course of the M.LI.Sc. programme. The expert committee contended that libraries were not the only information institutions that offered information services. There were many new types of information institutions that offered information services and that such institutions were growing. Nevertheless several of the techniques and models that were developed for traditional libraries were useful in these situations with or without modification.

It was also recognised that not only was the information itself as a commodity important, but also important were the systems and services that store, disseminate and use information. After the necessary deliberations the following curriculum was developed.

Core courses

MLIS – 01	Information, communication and society
MLIS – 02	Information sources, systems and programmes
MLIS – 03	Information processing and retrieval
MLIS – 05	Information institutions, services and products
MLIS – 04	Management of library and information centres
MLIS – 06	Application of information technology

Electives

MLIS – E1	Presentation and conservation of library materials
MLIS – E2	Research methodology
MLIS – E3	Academic libraries
MLIS – E4	Technical writing

Although candidates are only required to choose two electives, it was felt that several elective courses should be developed to provide as wide a range of choice as possible. It was also felt that by having several electives, new areas and topics could be incorporated into the programme without having to make significant changes in the curriculum.

Admission requirements

The admission criteria for this course is a B.LI.Sc. degree from a recognised university or any other equivalent qualification (e.g., PG Diploma in Library Science from a recognised university). Preference will be given to persons who are already employed in library and information units.

Other aspects of the programme such as course development, programme implementation, programme delivery, evaluation and examinations would be based on the norms developed for the B.LI.Sc. programme.

At the time of writing the course is in the planning and development stage and the first students are yet to be admitted. After a suitable period this course will also be evaluated.

CONCLUSION

Although distance education is a new development in the educational system of India, its potential to provide expanded educational opportunities is recognised by educators and the government. It is also believed that distance education will help to reduce the inequalities that exist in the education system in the country.

IGNOU has a mandate to plan and organise distance education in India. Therefore it has been engaged in providing educational opportunities at distance in many disciplines including library and information science. Distance education is different from conventional classroom teaching in many ways including how it uses modern communications technologies to support education. A proper mix of all media – print, audio, video and other electronic formats – improves the quality of distance education. Distance education also requires more organisation, more advanced planning and significantly more preparation time. Teachers need to be involved in the design, development and delivery of course materials as well as in counselling students. Teachers need to cooperate with other professionals who can contribute to the development of course materials as well as the efficient delivery of course materials. The success of any distance education systems depends on several factors.

Distance education has been viewed with some suspicion because it is different from conventional education. However, as distance education systems develop and expand this situation has been changing. Recognition of the potential of this system of education is growing, and therefore every effort must be made to ensure its success.

Appendix

SYLLABUS FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE AT IGNOU

Course I Information, Communications and Society

Block I	*INFORMATION NATURE, PROPERTY AND SCOPE*
Unit 1	Intellectual assets: data, information and knowledge
Unit 2	Data: definition, types, nature, properties and scope
Unit 3	Information: nature, definition, types, properties and scope

Block 2	*INFORMATION GENERATION AND COMMUNICATION*
Unit 4	Communication process and media
Unit 5	Generation of information: modes and forms
Unit 6	Information flow: Shanon-Weaver theory
Unit 7	Information diffusion process

Block 3	*KNOWLEDGE GENERATION CYCLE*
Unit 8	Structure and development of knowledge
Unit 9	Social epistemology of knowledge
Unit 10	Knowledge generation to utilisation
Unit 11	Knowledge and societal survival
Unit 15	Learning processes and theories

Block 4	*INFORMATION AND SOCIETY*
Unit 13	Social implications of information
Unit 14	Information as an economic resource
Unit 15	Information policies: national and international
Unit 16	Information society

Course II Information sources, systems and programmes

Block 1	*MULTI-MEDIA*
Unit 1	Physical medium of information
Unit 2	Print media, multi-media (hypermedia) and hypertext
Unit 3	Non-print media: microform, electronic and optical media

Block 2	INFORMATION SOURCES, SYSTEMS AND PROGRAMMES SUBJECT-WISE ORGANISATION
Unit 4	Humanities
Unit 5	Social sciences
Unit 6	Science and technology
Unit 7	Non-disciplinary studies
Unit 8	International organisations

Block 3	*INFORMATION SOURCES FOR USERS*
Unit 9	Content analysis and its correlation to clientele
Unit 10	Customised organisation of information sources
Unit 11	Citation analysis of information sources and their use
Unit 12	Aid to information sources

Block 4 INFORMATION EXPERTS AS RESOURCE PERSONS
Unit 13 Library and information personnel
Unit 14 Science and technology information intermediaries
Unit 15 Database designers and managers
Unit 16 Media personnel as sources of information

Course III Information processing and retrieval
Block 1 INTELLECTUAL ORGANISATION OF INFORMATION
Unit 1 Intellectual organisation of information: overview
Unit 2 Classification systems 1: general systems
Unit 3 Classification systems 2: special systems
Unit 4 Thesaurus: its structure and functions

Block 2 BIBLIOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION AND SUBJECT INDEXING
Unit 5 Bibliographic description: an overview
Unit 6 Standards for bibliographic record format
Unit 7 Bibliographic description of non-print media
Unit 8 Indexing: process and models

Block 3 INFORMATION STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL SYSTEMS
Unit 9 Objectives of ISAR systems
Unit 10 ISAR systems: operation and design
Unit 11 Compatibility of ISAR systems
Unit 12 Evaluation of ISAR systems

Block 4 INFORMATION RETRIEVAL
Unit 13 Information retrieval process
Unit 14 The process of searching
Unit 15 Search strategies and heuristic
Unit 16 Common command languages and multiple database searching

Course IV Information institutions, products and services
Block 1 INFORMATION INSTITUTIONS
Unit 1 Information institutions: evolution and growth
Unit 2 Information centres: types and their organisation
Unit 3 Data centres and referral centres
Unit 4 Information analysis and consolidation centres

Block 2 INFORMATION SERVICES
Unit 5 Literature searches and bibliographies
Unit 6 Technical enquiry service
Unit 7 Document delivery service
Unit 8 Translation services

Block 3 INFORMATION PRODUCTS
Unit 9 Information newsletters, house bulletins, in-house communications
Unit 10 Trade and product bulletins
Unit 11 State-of-the art and trend reports
Unit 12 Technical digests

Block 4	*DATABASE SUPPORT SERVICES*
Unit 13	Databases: types and use
Unit 14	Database intermediaries such as searchers, editors, etc.
Unit 15	On-line information systems and information networks
Unit 16	International standards for database design and development

Course V Management of information centres

Block 1	*MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES*
Unit 1	Principles of management
Unit 2	Management functions
Unit 3	Managerial quality and leadership
Unit 4	Schools of management

Block 2	*SYSTEMS ANALYSIS AND CONTROL*
Unit 5	Systems analysis and design
Unit 6	Work flow and organisation routines
Unit 7	Monitoring techniques
Unit 8	Evaluation techniques

Block 3	*PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT*
Unit 9	Overview of personnel management
Unit 10	Manpower planning
Unit 11	HRD – quality improvement programmes

Block 4	*FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT*
Unit 12	Budgeting and types
Unit 13	Budget control system
Unit 14	Costing techniques
Unit 15	Cost analysis

Block 5	*MARKETING OF INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES*
Unit 16	Information as a marketable commodity
Unit 17	Pricing of information products and services
Unit 18	Marketing strategies

Course VI Application of information technology

Block 1	*OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY*
Unit 1	Overview of computer technology
Unit 2	Overview of communications technology
Unit 3	Overview of reprography and micrography
Unit 4	Printing and publishing technology

Block 2	*LIBRARY AUTOMATION*
Unit 5	Use of computers for housekeeping operations
Unit 6	Computer-based acquisition control
Unit 7	Computer-based cataloguing
Unit 8	Computer-based serials control

Block 3 *DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT OF DATABASES*
Unit 9 Database concept and database components
Unit 10 Database structure, organisation and search
Unit 11 Database management systems

Block 4 *NETWORKS*
Unit 12 Resource sharing through networks
Unit 13 Networks and their classification
Unit 14 Network architecture and services
Unit 15 Bibliographic information networks

Electives
Course I Preservation and conservation of library materials
Block 1 *CONCEPT OF PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION*
Unit 1 Need for preservation
Unit 2 Evolution of writing materials: clay, papyrus, metallicplate, skin, parchment, vellums, paper

Block 2 *DIFFERENT TYPES OF LIBRARY MATERIALS*
Unit 3 Palm leaves: their nature and preservation
Unit 4 Manuscripts, books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, etc.
Unit 5 Audio-records: plates, tapes, discs, etc.
Unit 6 Micro documents: microfilm, microfiches, floppydiskettes, etc.

Block 3 *HAZARDS TO LIBRARY MATERIALS AND PRESERVATION*
Unit 7 Environmental factors: temperature, humidity, water,light, air-pollution, smoke, dust, etc.
Unit 8 Biological factors: fungi, insects, pests
Unit 9 Chemical factors: chemicals used in production andpreservation of documents

Block 4 *BINDING*
Unit 10 Different types of binding for library documents
Unit 11 Binding materials and their varieties
Unit 12 Binding process
Unit 13 Standards for library binding

Course II Research methodology
Block 1 *INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODOLOGY*
Unit 1 Meaning of research
Unit 2 Research problems and process of research
Unit 3 Sampling and definition of universe

Block 2 *DESIGN OF RESEARCH*
Unit 4 Definition and types of research design
Unit 5 Observation: exploratory, descriptive, diagnostic andexperimental formulations
Unit 6 Survey analysis, content analysis sociometric techniques
Unit 7 Constructive typology, projective techniques and statistical study
Unit 8 Case study and evaluation studies

Block 3	*TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS*
Unit 9	Definition and delimiting problems
Unit 10	Measures of central tendency, measures of association, co-relation, co-efficient, other contingencies
Unit 11	Regression scatter and time series analysis
Unit 13	Report writing: organisation of report, table presentation and reporting format, graphics in report presentation

Course III Academic library system

Block 1	*ACADEMIC LIBRARIES*
Unit 1	Role of an academic library in education
Unit 2	Academic library as a support system for education

Block 2	*DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES*
Unit 3	Role of UGC in promoting academic libraries, university college and other institutions
Unit 4	Role of library authorities of the institutions in promoting library resources
Unit 5	Development of library services
Unit 6	Financial management of academic libraries

Block 3	*COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT*
Unit 7	Collection development policy, weeding policy
Unit 8	Problems in collection organisation in an academic library
Unit 9	Collection development programmes, allocation of funds to collection-procurement, curriculum and collection development
Unit 10	Library committees and their role in collection development

Block 4	*STAFFING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES*
Unit 11	Norms and patterns for staffing university, college and school libraries
Unit 12	Continuing education programmes for academic library development
Unit 13	Personnel management in academic libraries

Block 5	*RESOURCE SHARING PROGRAMMES*
Unit 14	Resource sharing service: its objectives, organisation and development
Unit 15	INFLIBNET and its implications to library resource sharing
Unit 16	Regional and city network of libraries and their importance

Course IV Technical writing

Block 1	*COMMUNICATION PROCESS*
Unit 1	Overview of the communication process
Unit 2	Characteristic features of technical writing
Unit 3	Target groups in written communication
Unit 4	Reader-writer relationship

Block 2	*LINGUISTICS*
Unit 5	Language as a medium of expression of thought
Unit 6	Functional English style: semantics, syntax and diction
Unit 7	Readability and text
Unit 8	Aberrations in technical writing

Block 3	*STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF TECHNICAL COMMUNICATIONS*
Unit 9	Structure: definition, purpose, characteristics and functions
Unit 10	Collection, organisation and presentation of data including illustrations
Unit 11	Case studies: preparation of short communications, review articles, technical reports, monographs, dissertations and house bulletins
Block 4	*TECHNICAL EDITING AND EDITORIAL TOOLS*
Unit 12	Editor: functions, qualifications and special skills
Unit 13	Editorial process: evaluation process, editor-authorreference relationships in quality control
Unit 14	Editorial tools: dictionaries, style manuals standardspecifications, etc.

1994

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (1983). *Distance learning and adult students: a review of recent developments in the public sector.* Leicester: ACACE.

Faibisoff, S. (1987). "Distance education: definition and overview." *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science 27,* (4) 222-232.

Holmberg, B. (1986). *Growth and structure of distance education.* London: Croom Helm.

Keegan, D. (1986). *The foundations of distance education.* London: Croom Helm.

Mullick, S.P. and S. Mullick (1994). *A tracer study on the utility of BLISc Programme as perceived by BLISc graduates of IGNOU.* New Delhi: IGNOU.

Perry, W. and G. Rumble (1992). *A short guide to distance education.* Cambridge: International Extension College.

Rajan, T.N. and R. Satyanarayana (1990). "Library and Information Science education through distance education." *Library Science* 27, (3) 151-171.

Stewart, D, D. Keegan and B. Holmberg (1983). *Distance education: international perspectives.* London: Croom Helm.

Zingarelli, J. (1984). *Distance education: an information age approach to adult education.* Columbia, Ohio: National Centre for Research in Vocational Education.

212

LIBRARY SERVICES TO STUDENTS AT A DISTANCE: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO LIBRARY, DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND

Hayley Solomon

Distance education has become an integral facet of New Zealand life. In a 1993 review of distance education in New Zealand, Tate was moved to assert that the country's distance education institutions form *one of the most comprehensive, experienced and effective systems in the world.* He attributes this to the fact that the major institutions of open learning are national in scope, strong, sizable and linked conceptually for coordination and support by the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (Tate,1993).

At the tertiary level, universities offering distance education programmes are empowered to confer degrees, certificates and postgraduate diplomas that are accredited equivalents of those acquired through more traditional on-campus channels. This naturally places an enormous burden of responsibility on information dissemination services to students at a distance – academic libraries in particular.

This paper is a case study of the distance library service of the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. It is felt that the study will offer a representative glimpse into the current status of information services to off-campus students around the country. It will highlight issues of particular concern to this student body: response time, information literacy and proactive coordination between teaching and library staff in course design and preparation. The impact of technology on the library's ability to service remote students will also be explored.

The University of Otago is the oldest university in New Zealand. Founded in 1869, it has a student body of around 14,000, a small but significant proportion of whom study at a distance.

In 1994, the university's distance teaching programme consisted of 21 award courses that range both in diversity and complexity. Examples from the spectrum of undergraduate courses include Theology, Maori, Western Music and Health Promotion. Postgraduate courses are similarly broad, and include Clinical Pharmacy, Consumer and Applied Sciences and Aviation Medicine at the master's level (University of Otago Calendar, 1993).

While University Extension (the department responsible for the distance education programme) provides most of the course material required by students, the library remains a significant and extensive adjunct to students seeking further supportive literature, or who have projects requiring in-depth bibliographies and referenced assignments.

It is notable, however, that while responses to a recent survey on university library services indicate a marked degree of satisfaction with library output (75.5% of respondents described the library service as helpful), only 37% of students utilised the information facilities offered. This finding is in tandem with those in the United States and Australia, where students tend to make minimal use of academic libraries. A Deakin University user study rather ironically reveals that the library collection is deemed by many undergraduate students to be superfluous to their educational programme (Mays, 1986).

Public libraries worldwide appear to be the preferred resource, Lewis (1987) going so far as to describe them as "essential components" of the open learning system. In the case of the University of Otago survey, 46.6% of respondents were found to utilise the local public library as a resource at some stage.

This anomaly may be the result of perceived inaccessibility or, indeed, what has become termed as "information illiteracy". Distance students – particularly undergraduates – do not acquire the necessary searching and retrieval skills to access information comfortably at an academic level.

Recommendations to counter this phenomenon are currently in place and are being given serious consideration. Among these are curriculum-based requirements that students acquire relevant search strategies and competencies and that distance library staff be included as key members of course teams planning and preparing distance courses to ensure close articulation between course needs and library resources (Hearne, 1994).

It must be noted that the picture is not entirely gloomy. Existing library services for this user segment are both extensive and, as far as possible, equivalent to the access available to conventional information seekers. The university takes the stance that students at a distance have full and equal right to access the more than 1.35 million volumes held in the various libraries located on the campus. To this end, it employs one qualified librarian and 0.5 library assistant to serve exclusively the needs of those who are studying in outlying areas throughout Australasia.

This philosophy of maximising library facilities to off-campus students does not stop at books, but also includes access to journals – both abstracts and articles – as well as recourse to a powerful national interlending network.

While inequities do exist – the most obvious that comes to mind being browsability – the disadvantage is offset by additional services that are peculiar, in library terms, to the unique circumstances of off-campus students. Most notable among these are literature searches undertaken by the distance librarian in response to subject requests.

COMPARISON OF ACCESS

As an illustrative example, the author presents a simulated case study which concerns the reduction or elimination of the gap, that seemingly exists, with respect to access to information. Two imaginary students will be presented. Both are doctors and are pursuing a postgraduate diploma in Aviation Medicine. They both have a special interest in the relative safety of back facing airplane seats as opposed to the conventional forward facing types. One is Raoul who is able to make personal visits to the university library. The other is Simon, who as an off-campus students lives in rural New Zealand. On the face of it Raoul has the more idyllic situation with respect to information access. The case study indicates that such assumptions may be flawed.

On-campus scenario

Raoul has several options open to him in his quest for knowledge. He is able to ask for help from one of the several approachable librarians at hand. Following this, he can nip down to the journal section of the university's medical library and have a good browse through the *Journal of Aviation, Space and Environmental Medicine* and other pertinent titles.

If he is enterprising, he may do a quick manual search through the abstracts or else book time to do a more comprehensive search on the CD-ROM format of *Medline*. In searching through the library's catalogue he might find a monograph of interest, or go one step further and request a subject search on the New Zealand Bibliographic Network (NZBN). Fortunately for him, if an item of interest is held by another library anywhere in the country, he can request it to be couriered down and issued to him under the university library's auspices.

Raoul's searches need not end there! He may do some ad hoc browsing and "happen to notice" a relevant article when he is relaxing and reading the *Lancet* in the quiet comfort of the library's surrounds. Better yet, he may be pointed in the right direction by a colleague with whom he is in close geographical contact.

Rauol's visits to the library are of his making, including the option to pursue last minute research searches.

Off-campus scenario

Simon is geographically too distant to visit the library himself, but needs relevant, current material just as much as his distant friend Raoul. What can he do?

In many ways, his task is easier and more convenient than his urban compatriot. Provided he is organised and gets his request in early, Simon can sit back and simply wait for the material to arrive. The last minute information scrounge that Raoul can conduct is not in his reality.

While, sadly, he cannot browse as Raoul, eclectically gathering little snippets as he goes, he will still have reasonable access to abstracts. These will have been downloaded onto disk for him by the distance librarian during the course of a subject search done on Simon's behalf. Strangely, he might find he has an advantage, here, for Raoul, accustomed as he is to using the medical library, might never have thought to stroll over to the science library, where technology indexes are housed.

Armed with citations and abstracts, it is a simple step for Simon to request selected articles and books. These are either photocopied or interloaned on his behalf. Books are issued with an extended loan period that is cognisant of the time factors involved in postage and handling. In short, almost anything Raoul can do Simon can too, with the help of a trained intermediary.

While, at first blush, Raoul is in the advantaged position, this study reveals that because of the difference in the relationship that distance students must have with library staff makes it possible for them to access a greater depth of information. Because of the intermediary role of professionals whose library and information skills are well honed, Simon's access to pertinent information is considerably greater than Raoul's.

The only real exception to this will be in the interloaning of monographs, were the time delays involved in posting the requested item in several directions to satisfy one loan. Each loan request had to be posted from the lending library to Dunedin, then to the student, then back to Dunedin for forwarding to the lending library has proved to be problematic. In most instances this routing has ceased. (Here, public libraries linked to the same bibliographic network as their academic counterparts have a significant role to play.)

SERVICE CHALLENGES

Distance librarianship faces many challenges. In this regard, Howes (1983) posits the rather radical view that traditional library services should not be transferred at all to off-campus students. He suggests that strong problem-solving skills will be engendered if students were allowed to fend entirely for themselves.

While the view is certainly novel in librarianship terms, it is the contention of this paper that by being adaptable and proactive, many of the traditional constraints confronting library services at a distance can be obviated.

Briefly, some of the issues that the University of Otago Library has confronted and dealt with include the following.

Time factors

Inequities arise in loan periods owing to handling and postal delays. The library now automatically codes in an extended loan period to all students in a distance programme.

Accessibility

On-campus students have greater access to personal help and material within the framework of library opening hours. The university compensates its distance students for this imbalance by being contactable via phone, fax, answering machine and mail. The introduction of an E-mail service has been suggested in a recent submission by the Distance Teaching Unit to the Library Review (Committee).

Photocopies

Off-campus students do not have physical access to original articles and journals. In deference to this, the distance service organises photocopies of all that is required subject to normal copyright regulations.

Reserve material

Items in the reserve collection are restricted. Consequently, distance students are disadvantaged. The university recognises this problem and has responded in two primary ways. Firstly, it has instituted a special collection dedicated to the needs and convergent interest areas of distance students. In a manner of speaking, this establishes a separate reserve collection for distance students in their own right. And secondly, subject to copyright concerns, the distance librarian will copy relevant pages or chapters from items in the collection that is inaccessible. In exceptional cases, a student may negotiate to have reserve material sent on a reduced loan period, but admittedly, this is rare.

In the University Extension's submission to the Library Review (Committee), several excellent long-term goals for the service were delineated. These relate, in the main, to the use to which telecommunications and computer technology could be put to extend library resources and skills to remote students.

If the suggested technology could be incorporated into the service (never forgetting the ubiquitous cost dynamic) the most pressing problem facing distance services – the dearth of search skills necessary to successful information retrieval – could become a problem of the past. Librarians servicing the distance component would, in the event of such innovation, be released from the currently necessary but nevertheless inappropriate function of research assistance. This would effectively facilitate the timeliness described by Kascus as *so critical* to remote service provision (Kascus and Aguilar, 1988).

In the 1994 report to the Library Review (Committee), the following suggestions were made, together with this cited rationale:

Distance students confront particular difficulties in searching and utilising central library resources: all students should be required to acquire, develop and exercise a wide range of information searching and retrieval skills. Information literacy should be a goal of each course of study together with an understanding of the content and the acquisition of relevant skills and competencies. It is suggested, therefore, that the distance students should have:

- remote access to on-line library catalogues;
- remote access to CD-ROM databases;
- remote access to electronic full text retrieval and delivery;
- the ability to order information sources electronically;
- fast delivery of materials (Hearne, 1994)

Currently, students are exposed to bibliographic and technological innovations at second hand only. While they are aware that database searches can be undertaken on their behalf, they are not fully cognisant of the benefits to be derived from such databases.

Many students are confused when they request a subject search and receive abstracts rather than articles in response. Similarly, they have difficulty comprehending why many of the items retrieved through literature searches are not held by the library. In many respects, remote access to databases and the library catalogue would help clarify these issues and offer immediate feedback as to the library's holdings.

Power (1987) points out, though, that enhanced telecommunications and information technology brings with it its own unique set of problems. Primary among these is that with instant access to catalogue information comes associated frustration with the less than instantaneous delivery of materials. In the year that remote access was introduced at California State University, for example, requests doubled but turn-around times did not significantly adjust (Power, 1987).

The University of South Africa, with a student body of around 116,000 is currently investigating issues and implications in this regard (Shillinglaw, 1992). Because of its size and resources, the feasibility of implementing technological changes on a grand scale is theoretically quite high.

Shillinglaw (1992) asserts that there may well be substantial advantages in *abandoning print and delivering documents in electronic form*. He notes that a number of companies – in particular Sony – are producing electronic books based on mini CD technology and that the optical-disc-based electronic book publishing environment seems likely to become a significant new trend in enhanced information provision.

Library storage problems are immense for academic libraries charged with multiple copy provision for remote students. These problems could be obviated by alternative technologies like the *Smartbook*, which utilises electronic cards for the storage of text. In cooperation with copyright holders it would be a simple matter to download texts for students.

Seiler (1992) envisages the eventual disappearance of the monograph as a bibliographic entity, due to the current trend of reducing prices for information technology. One cannot help but consider this view to be somewhat premature, however. In this respect, Shillinglaw (1992) makes a very valid point when he suggests that *students of distance education come from a range of economic circumstances and access to sophisticated technology varies widely. A text or information delivery system must not exclude any student from equal access to information, or prejudice their chances of achieving academic excellence.*

This would certainly be true of the University of Otago, which strongly adheres to an equity of access policy. However, technological innovation may not be entirely precluded, so long as traditional print options are maintained.

The University Extension Department utilises an impressive array of telecommunication technologies to make connections with its remote students. Courses are offered through a network of teaching venues linked through a complex teleconferencing system. With the aid of personal microphones and amplifying equipment, the obstacle of geographic diversity is effectively removed (University of Otago, 1993).

Students may speak directly to their lecturers and actively participate in group discussions on what becomes, effectively, a toll-free line. While this connection does not extend to library services, close contact is maintained between programme coordinators and library professionals. Issues pertinent to the delivery of services are discussed and often solved through this medium.

The American College and Research Libraries Guidelines for Extended Library Services appears to be the gold standard for distance services in the United States, representing, as Kascus and Aguilar put it, the library world's best contribution to quality assurance in off-campus library programmes (Kascus and Aguilar, 1988). It is really heartening to note that the University of Otago Library conforms, in the main, to its fundamental precepts. Kascus and Aguilar have developed a working model based on the guidelines that can be outlined as follows:

- appointment of librarian whose sole concern is provision of service to remote students. The librarian must have support staff as appropriate;
- the librarian should act as a liaison between the various components of the distance programme;
- specific services that should be integral to information provision at this level should include reference, bibliographic instruction, inter-library cooperation, online database searching, circulation, document delivery and the photocopying of journal articles, and
- a toll-free number should be provided to obviate additional costs to the student.

With the exception of this last provision (discussed earlier) the University of Otago is in complete synchrony with the model outlined.

With reference to database searching, students may request searches – free of charge – from the following CD ROM databases: Medline; International Pharmaceutical Index; Science Citation Index; Social Science Citation Index; SportDiscus; Psychlit; ERIC; ABI; Supermap 2; MLA Bibliography and the Life Sciences Collections.

Further, on a pay-by-user basis, students may request online interactive searches on DIALOG, KIWINET and INFOS. In such circumstances the help of a trained intermediary is an advantage, since costing is based on efficiency of search strategy.

If one were to sum up the role of the distance librarian, one would have to say that it is dynamic, flexible and adaptive. It differs from other areas in the spectrum of the library profession in that users cannot easily be segmented and uniformly served. An often-made criticism of this type of information provision is that it encourages spoon feeding, thereby in a sense undermining the academic process.

The author would like to feel that the reverse can – and should – also be apposite: it is the unique privilege and challenge of the distance librarian that in serving clients, an understanding of bibliographic strategies are engendered. Particularly as the gaining of such skills may be enjoyed on the part of users who might otherwise be precluded from the experience owing to the unassailable barriers of time and geography.

Deakin University's Margaret Cameron (1988) encapsulates this ethos when she states that:

> *Off-campus students are sold pretty short in terms of their library experience, and the service they get from the library staff must make up to them, to some extent at least, for what is missing in their library life – that feeling of being surrounded by an almost limitless resource of ideas and excitement. Since they are forced to be at the end of a very long spoon, the least we can do is ensure the spoon is full.*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cameron, M. (1988). "A full long spoon." *Australian Academic and Research Libraries 19,* (4) 223-228.

De Silva, R. (1988). "Resource centre support for open learning: a framework." *Programmed Learning and Educational Technology 25,* (3) 231-236.

Grosser, K. and G. Bagnell (1989). "External students and public libraries: students' perspectives." *Australian Library Journal 38,* (4) 303-317.

Hearne, T. (1994). *University Extension: Distance Teaching Unit Submission to the University Library Review.* Dunedin: University of Otago.

Howes, B. (1983). "Library services to external students: the wrong answers, from the wrong people, to the wrong questions." *Australian Academic and Research Libraries 14,*(1) 85-90.

Kascus, M and W. Aguilar (1988). "Providing library support to off-campus programs." *College and Research Libraries 49,* (1) 29-37.

Lewis, D. T. (1987). "Libraries and continuing education in the United Kingdom: a strategy for cooperation." In B. Lessin (Ed.) *Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Reno, Nevada.* Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University Press.

Mays, T. (1986). "Do undergraduates need their libraries? A study of users and nonusers at Deakin University." *Australian Academic and Reserach Libraries 17,* (1) 51-62.

Power, C. (1987). "Dial up access to on-line catalogs and the extended campus library services program." In B. Lessin (Ed.) *Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings: Reno, Nevada.* Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University Press.

Seiler, L. (1992). "The concept of the book in the age of the digital electronic medium." *Library Software Review 11,*(1) 19-29.

Shillinglaw, N. (1992). "Document supply and distance education library service." *Interlending and Document Supply 20,* (4) 143-151.

Tate, O. (1993). "A vision of distance in New Zealand." *Distance Education Association of New Zealand Bulletin 16,* 89-113.

University of Otago (1993). *University of Otago Calendar, 1994.* Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago.

OPEN LIBRARY INFORMATION FOR OFF-CAMPUS STUDENTS: THE AUSTRALIAN SCENARIO

Marie-Thérèse Van Dyk

OFF-CAMPUS LEARNING IN AUSTRALIA

In Australia, off-campus learning was conceived, at one level, to overcome the tyranny of distance and offer the benefits of tertiary-level education to people who, for reasons such as living in remote areas, had difficulties enrolling in on-campus courses. Coined by Geoffrey Blainey, the expression "the tyranny of distance" has acquired the status of an icon to define the challenges and constraints imposed by Australia's immense land mass and low population. Only 17 million people live on the Australian island continent which is almost as large a land mass as the United States and Canada combined.

Introduced at the University of Queensland in 1911, distance education experienced a steady growth until the 1970s when six universities and 42 Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) were providing distance courses to some 48,000 students throughout Australia. The watershed point for tertiary education, including distance education, came in 1988 when the then Federal Minister for Employment and Training, John Dawkins, announced a significant restructuring of higher education. The Dawkins' imperative, grounded in economies of scale and a vision of enhancing the quality and calibre of tertiary-level education, eradicated the existing binary system based on CAEs and universities. Instead, a programme of amalgamation would create large universities where CAEs with low enrollments were amalgamated with other CAEs to establish new universities, while other CAEs were tied to established universities.

Correlated with the efficiency and quality objective was the decision to reduce duplication and improve the overall quality of distance education by consolidating and rationalising this mode of study. This was to be achieved by designating eight universities as Distance Education Centres (DECs). Institutions which had failed to acquire DEC status and wished to provide distance education courses were permitted to do so, with a proviso that they collaborate with the nominated DECs, drawing upon their course development, production and delivery expertise to engender high quality distance education programmes.

Political considerations, economic pragmatism and social needs caused a further re-evaluation of tertiary education in 1992. Although Australia was committed to the concept of the "clever country", funding for higher education was constricted, and with relatively high unemployment, increasingly more students were remaining at school and obtaining the essential qualifications to enter university. However, funding-based quota restrictions prevented their obtaining university places. With demand theoretically overwhelming university placement supply, the federal government announced that increased higher education flexibility to accommodate these potential students was required. The result was a new initiative, a nationwide open learning programme which in effect, deregulated the quota-based university system and opened opportunities for individual universities to offer off-campus tertiary study. The new programme, managed by the Open Learning Agency of Australia (OLAA) offers students a new approach to tertiary study. Students registering with OLAA may choose a wide range of courses from nine universities and three Technical and Further Education Colleges (TAFE). Students may and do register for units from a variety of universities at any one time. There are no entry level requirements or quotas to hinder students from obtaining entry to tertiary education.

While this 1992 strategy change leading to the establishment of OLAA's programme apparently contravened the 1988 focus towards rationalising tertiary education, the need for an integrated educational infrastructure had been recognised as early as 1983 when it was observed that *the nation needs* [remote learning] *provision co-ordinated on a national scale and seen in a national perspective...*[and] *in particular, there is a need for collaboration and development of policy in relation to technological change* (Johnson, 1983). Similarly, the 1986 *Review of efficiency and effectiveness in higher education* noted that there should be educational cooperation between institutions and that the implementation of communications technology within the higher educational arena was highly desirable (Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, 1986).

It may be opportune at this stage to consider some definitions of distance education, external study, open learning and off-campus study within the Australian context. The differences between these are more than an exercise in semantics as they have ramifications for those involved in this type of education, including libraries offering or expected to provide services to students. Until the advent of the OLAA, distance education, external and off-campus study expressed the concept of an educational programme where the student and the lecturers as well as ancillary support staff were physically separated. Basically, internal or on-campus and distance academic structures were integrated to the extent that the distance mode paralleled the internal mode. The primary difference between the two was delivery and administration where CAEs and universities with significant distance education programmes established discrete organisational infrastructures to manage distance education. Open learning, OLAA style, has impacted on the definition of distance education and off-campus study. Now, the term external study has been effectively phased out and off-campus is regarded now as an umbrella term which incorporates both the structured, traditional distance education mode and open learning which is based on flexibility and choice.

OFF-CAMPUS LIBRARY SERVICES

While reports such as the 1986 *Review of efficiency* had signalled rationalisation, cooperation and national strategies, libraries have not fully achieved the recommended objectives. Although the *Guidelines for library services to external students* published in 1982 by the Library Association of Australia determined ideal standards, there continues to be divergent off-campus library services predicated by differing funding levels and service philosophies. All libraries attached to universities offering traditional distance education courses offer a mail, telephone or fax request service for specific books, journal articles and reference or research services where librarians will conduct literature searches to identify and retrieve pertinent books and journal articles. All libraries provide postal services where books, audiovisual materials and photocopies are mailed to the students. For all libraries outward mail is free and some libraries provide free return postage. Differing degrees of service are offered to students residing overseas. Also available are differing levels and types of technology-based library services.

A major limitation of traditional approaches to off-campus library services is that information access is not completely open. Students are constrained, to an extent, with the possibility of choice and selection of information they need. They do not have the opportunity to conduct their own information retrieval searches or use the serendipity approach of browsing through the library shelves or conduct their own CD-ROM searches. Also, this traditional service, which was devised to accommodate the needs of distance education students registered in a single university, does not fully address the requirements of open learning students who may be enrolled in a number of universities at any one time.

COOPERATIVE LIBRARY ARRANGEMENTS

Greater openness of library information access can be and is being achieved through reciprocal agreements between libraries. Several intra-state and inter-state library cooperative networks based primarily on reciprocal borrowing have been established. The State of New South Wales has the CLANN network whose members are university, TAFE, special and public libraries. The State of Victoria's counterpart is the CAVAL scheme whose members are academic and special libraries. Unlike the CAVAL and CLANN schemes, inter-state agreements are loosely structured, informal arrangements mainly between university libraries involved in off-campus services. Another interesting cooperative arrangement which transcends state boundaries is a consortium between three libraries, Deakin University, University of South Australia and Charles Sturt University who provide off-campus library services. Their cooperative arrangement takes reciprocal borrowing one step further, that is into the off-campus mode where each of the three libraries will deliver books to distance education students enrolled with one of the other universities.

Even though cooperative agreements have functioned well, there are some constraints. Normally, reciprocity does not extend to services such as CD-ROM or other electronic databases. For pragmatic or philosophical reasons some libraries do not subscribe to even base-level reciprocal arrangements. Australian university libraries are funded to provide services to their own enrolled students rather than to tertiary level students in general, which has led to some libraries denying free library privileges to students from other universities. Radford (1988) argues that *undergraduate students should not be compelled to take refuge in other libraries because their home institution has failed them.* The extension of this principle is that if universities initiate off-campus units they should ensure that their libraries assume responsibility for adequate library support for students enrolled in this mode of study. Although libraries attached to universities providing off-campus education embrace this philosophy through offering off-campus library services, they cannot realistically prevent their students from approaching other libraries. As Australia has a free public library service, this may have created the erroneous impression in the minds of off-campus students and academics who often refer their students to other libraries, that all libraries and their resources are freely available.

Surveys by Winter and Cameron (1983) and Grosser and Bagnell (1989) demonstrated that only 40% of distance education students take advantage of the off-campus library services available to them from their university, even when these include access to an excellent off-campus library service. It appears that students frequently opt instead to approach local public or university libraries close to where they live or work because they wish to have immediate information access; and they want to have the ability to have full control over selecting the information they feel they need. An analysis conducted by Deakin University Library towards the end of 1993 revealed that open learning students residing in areas adjacent to Deakin University campus libraries preferred to use the Deakin libraries rather than the off-campus services offered by their "home" university libraries. The Deakin survey found that significantly less than 40% of open learning students living outside the local region and enrolled in Deakin units were using Deakin's off-campus library services. If the Deakin analysis is extrapolated nationwide, it implies that open learning students like their distance education counterparts are opting for local libraries. This trend may continue as open learning students are not locked into a specific university and by extension tend to have a more open attitude towards selecting libraries. The entry of this additional level of off-campus students, that is open learning students who need flexible access to library services, has set the stage for a new cooperative library endeavour.

THE OPEN LEARNING LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE

Established in 1993, the Open Learning Library and Information Service (OLLIS) is the library support equivalent to the OLAA. Just as OLAA is an educational broker, OLLIS performs a complementary role for library services. As an open learning library broker OLLIS, which is funded by OLAA, is a centralised administrative unit which coordinates an Australia-wide open learning library network based on a voucher scheme. OLLIS has a diverse range of functions which is directed towards libraries and students. Support services to libraries participating in the network range from providing guidelines on voucher use and voucher reimbursement, distributing reading lists to assist with library collection development, advising libraries on the types of requests that open learning students may make and how to handle them.

Several layers of services are provided to students. The first is one of enhancing library access where OLLIS distributes library support packages to all open learning students. The packages contain an Open Learning Library Guide which details why students need to use libraries and highlights the services of libraries participating in the network. The packages include vouchers, funded by OLAA, which students can use to pay the service fees required by university libraries. To assist open learning students' capacity to retrieve relevant information from libraries, the packages also include a list of libraries that offer library information-retrieval skills tutorials. Another service targeted towards students is a referral service where OLLIS provides advice on the various library services available to open learning students throughout Australia.

Operating within a relatively volatile open leaning environment, OLLIS has undertaken two additional roles. Concerned about overcoming library access barriers, OLLIS is organising video and computerised library instruction packages for open learning students. Appreciating the role technology can play in opening up information access, OLLIS is providing library-oriented input and advice into technological initiatives planned for open learning students.

The two linchpins of the OLLIS programme are the voucher scheme and the library network. From the students' point of view, vouchers help students pay for a variety of library services which otherwise may not be made available to them. It should be noted here that the existing library reciprocal arrangements do not accommodate open learning students. Also, the voucher scheme is a significant departure from the established reciprocal agreements, where OLLIS, unlike the other cooperative arrangements, acknowledges that libraries may have demands made on them from students enrolled in universities other than their own and will recompense directly these libraries, through the voucher scheme.

The open learning library network is based on the OLAA's premises of flexibility and choice and was designed to minimise barriers to library services. The network recognises that open learning students may be studying units from a number of universities at any one time and thus, the library network gives students the opportunity to select those libraries that have collections relevant to their study requirements and offer services which accommodate their needs. Each library participating in the network has the freedom to determine its own internal policies relating to services they wish to offer to open learning students. Participating libraries can decide if they will accept vouchers and how they will use them. For instance, libraries may incorporate vouchers into their own established policies or reassess their policies to allow them to accommodate the vouchers.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND LIBRARY ACCESS TO OFF-CAMPUS STUDENTS

There is an array of technology-based information services that can overcome the perception of tyranny of distance and lack of immediate access to library resources and services. While most libraries provide dial-in access to their computer catalogues, only a few have challenged the full potential of the technology to provide a broad-based library service encompassing accessing a range of library resources and services. Such services could incorporate dial-in CD-ROM databases and, using the technology's capacity, give direct linkage where students can request library materials electronically such as books and journal articles. Another intriguing option is using the technology to promote a three-way electronic dialogue between academics, library staff and students.

Libraries such as the University of the Southern Cross and Monash University have implemented remote or modem access to CD-ROM databases. In the case of Monash's service, called ROMOTE, students throughout Australia and as far afield as Japan are using it. Enthusiastic as they are with the 24-hour, seven-day-a-week dial-in service, there is a consistent refrain of frustration from students that the CD-ROM databases highlight a mass of information which is not immediately accessible in full text. This is a predictable problem, identified by Kascus and Aguilar (1988) where technology increases "timeliness" expectations with students wanting a document delivery service which parallels or reflects the real-time they expend to identify pertinent material indexed on dial-in databases. It is compounded for remote users of dial-in services as they have to either travel to a library or contact a library via conventional or electronic mail, or through fax or phone to obtain documents they have identified. They then must wait three to four days, or even longer for those residing in isolated areas, for information to be delivered. Journal articles could be faxed; however, surprisingly few libraries use this as their first option, preferring instead to post the articles. The reasons usually given are cost and time. It is feasible also that some libraries may be trapped in a particular services mind-set and have not fully assessed the implications from the customers' point of view and the potential of fax rather than mail delivery.

The ideal solution as has been recognised by Kopp (1991) is to replicate rapid identification of information with a correspondingly fast receipt of information by electronic document delivery. Although this is a technological reality, non-technical factors impede electronic document delivery as an easy solution to open information access. Firstly, a minute number of documents is available in an electronic format. Secondly, there is the question of copyright. A paper presented at 1992 ALIA conference, *The telelibrary and electronic document delivery*, analysed copyright within the context of electronic storage and transmission of text. According to the paper's author, publishers were never overly concerned with breach of copyright as it applied to inter-library loans because the service was generally slow and thus deterred a high proportion of potential users, particularly undergraduates. Electronic document delivery, on the other hand, with its speed and increasingly easy access to a broad spectrum of information hungry users is seen as a threat by publishers. Hence, for obvious reasons, electronic delivery has placed the question of copyright firmly on publishers' agendas.

Some libraries, such as the Curtin University Library and the University of the Southern Cross, are circumventing the copyright conundrum by investigating the possibility of providing dial-in access to commercially available full-text documents through services such as CARL UNCOVER. The major limitation with this strategy is that the majority of the readily retrievable full-text documents via electronic services are often irrelevant to the majority of the off-campus undergraduate population. Generally, these students want fast access to specified or targeted books or journal articles. In effect, they require quick, easy delivery of something akin to the library's reserve collection, which creates a heavy demand on recommended texts. Australian university libraries have acknowledged this need and are investigating converting recommended readings into an electronic format. This process is predictably slow given the complex terrain of copyright and licensing agreements.

Most Australian libraries in the business of off-campus services have devoted their energies to these two tiers of library-based electronic information access. The major effort has been directed towards document identification through various databases while less attention has been devoted to electronic delivery of information. Few libraries are challenging the technology to enhance student access to vital corollary services offered by academic, administrative and library staff. Deakin University, Edith Cowan University and Monash University, to differing degrees, have introduced something akin to a simplified, student focussed Internet which enables off-campus students to interrogate not only on-line databases, but also allows them to use electronic mail and bulletin boards to quickly and effectively communicate with, and obtain services from lecturers and library staff. Through electronic mail students can ask for a range of information and services, while for library staff electronic facilities both speed up response time in reacting to student demands and provide an efficient electronic conduit to answer queries.

The technology-based services just described are normally single-site specific where students link in to a university or library network. Another option now emerging in Australia is the extension of electronic access facilities beyond individual universities or library infrastructures. One is the Queensland Open Learning Centre Network. Launched in 1989, this cooperative network incorporates universities and some TAFEs. Briefly, each of these centres serve as an interface between regional community centres and higher education institutions.

Compared with the Queensland cross-institutional centres in New South Wales, information outlets tend to be organisation-specific. In 1992, the University of New England-Northern Rivers, now the University of the Southern Cross, established three Open Learning Access Centres (OLACs) primarily to satisfy the needs of their own distance education students. As the core philosophy guiding the OLAC initiative was to create visible, accessible and non-threatening student-focussed centres, OLACs are located in the central business or shopping areas of country towns. The centres provide a range of university services through facilities such as phone, fax, computers and modems. Apart from technological access, the centres give off-campus students a "home" away from their home campus. Staffed by liaison officers, the centres offer a venue where students can gather together in a quasi-tutorial situation. Library staff also visit the OLACs to provide information retrieval programmes and other library services which require a personal touch. Monash University has commenced a similar programme where the primary objective is to minimise distance barriers through electronic access to the university's services.

It is clear that while technology-based outlets such as those summarised have enhanced information access, they are limited to discrete geographical areas where only a small percentage of students can take advantage of them. It is equally clear that these initiatives have been fragmented, where they have been developed as narrow or broad-based regional centres.

THE OPEN LEARNING ELECTRONIC SUPPORT SERVICE

The Open Learning Electronic Support Service (OLESS) currently being developed by the Open Learning Agency of Australia in conjunction with the Open Learning Technology Corporation should eliminate geographical or institutional fragmentation by creating a national technology-based information network. One of the prime objectives of OLESS is to build a platform integrating existing networks and systems to create an Australia-wide, off-campus student-focussed information web. Students will have the option of dialing into the network from home, their workplace or designated local OLESS access centres. It is envisaged that information-based organisations such as university, public libraries and telecentres would function as local access points. Obviously, organisations nominated as local access points must guarantee accessibility for students in terms of appropriate opening hours and suitability of location and facilities for study or research purposes. Services targeted for the OLESS project are course information, electronic mail, bulletin board services, file transfer facilities and access to various online library services.

Telecentres, also known as telecottages, warrant mention as they are a relatively new concept for Australia and are poised to play a pertinent role in fostering information access. Like the telecottages originally created in the Scandinavian countries, the Australian version promotes equity of access for people living in remote areas by providing electronically linked services normally available only to those residing in areas that have large populations. For the purposes of educational level information access, electronic capabilities at the telecentres will support electronic mail, teleconferencing and connection to off-campus programmes including library services. Apart from the technology, the additional critical telecentre component is staff who have the expertise to provide systems and software support and to train customers who may be relatively inexperienced with computers and their applications.

USER-FOCUSSED TECHNOLOGY-BASED INFORMATION ACCESS

A number of issues need to be considered with information technology as it applies to off-campus services. Certainly, technology has proved its viability to open up information access to students. However, it must be pragmatically appraised within the context of determining that there is an appropriate match between the technology itself and academic programmes, associated services such as those offered by libraries and, importantly, students' needs. Too frequently, the driver is the technology rather than using the technology as a servant which will function as a medium to satisfy people's information needs. Technology acts both as a gateway to the profusion of information available and as an information source. Those responsible for opening up information gates must signpost them and provide navigation aids to guide both experienced and novice users to appropriate information rather than launching them into a morass of information. What is required is an electronic equivalent to a library's information desk or an electronic version of paper copy library guides targeted towards a wide range of customers requiring varying levels of library services. Automated information guides conceivably will be menu driven, leading customers from basic to complex information or service options. Electronic training programmes are also necessary as some students may not have the appropriate know-how to use the information retrieval technology or have the analytical skills to create search strategies or the ability to comprehend, decode and use the data retrieved. Such aids are essential for off-campus students as they cannot signal to the librarian on duty that they are experiencing difficulties in using the library's electronic resources.

What should be avoided when establishing off-campus electronic access services is throwing open an unmodified version of the Internet. Farber (1989) indicates that while making resources such as the Internet available to off-campus students is an easy option, it is not a solution as its wealth and complexity of information could impede rather than foster real access. For example, including computer catalogues from libraries in Australia that either do not hold relevant resources or do not provide services such as borrowing privileges to customers other than their own immediate clientele is less than useful. What is preferred is a structured menu guiding students from readily accessible information resources to more complex or esoteric ones.

This leads to the question of who should be involved in deciding what types and levels of electronic-based information services should be offered to off-campus students. Information technology has undoubtedly the capacity to inform, but there is another element which may curtail this. Stakeholders within universities have differing objectives, values and attitudes where they make certain assumptions about students' needs. What a university librarian deems appropriate for the library's customers might be worlds apart from the views of the Dean of Academic Services. The latter may believe that off-campus study guides and discrete packages of set readings are so comprehensive that no other information services are required. University librarians on the other hand may take the philosophical high ground and argue that tertiary education must give students the potential to use the wealth of information available in libraries. Others within the university may have a preference for traditional services rather than the new technologies. Yet again, there will be some who will promote a balance between traditional library services and the new wave of electronic access systems. It is essential, therefore, that there is negotiation and consultation between all stakeholders involved in either designing or implementing electronic information services targeted towards off-campus students.

Before embarking on a student-oriented technology-based information service it is imperative that students' actual information requirements are taken into account. Rather than making assumptions on students' needs, considerable effort should be devoted to researching their needs. User surveys should elicit information on student demand and as well as their capacity and competency in using the relevant hardware, software and services scheduled for inclusion in the technology-based programme. Surveys undertaken at a number of Australian universities have revealed that, contrary to expectations, a surprising number of off-campus students had access to personal computers and modems and others expressed a willingness to purchase the necessities once the service was operational.

The issue of equity has been raised when electronic access has been proposed for off-campus students. The OLESS project with its community-based outlets should alleviate concerns expressed in the past that for financial or other reasons off-campus students would experience difficulties in obtaining the necessary hardware and software. Also, it should be clearly understood that electronic access is just one of a series of options. Students unwilling or unable to use the technology will continue to have information access through off-campus library services and the various library networks.

CONCLUSION

The interrelated themes of tyranny of distance and open information access have been the substantive issues of this overview of Australian library services which are provided for off-campus students. Although a range of excellent off-campus library services is available, surveys demonstrate that students prefer to both personally select and have immediate access to information. Cooperative networks can satisfy this need for students who have the benefit of a major library in their locality. Students living in remote areas do not have this option.

Technology, if designed and managed well, can and does play a vital role in bringing information and users together. Australian libraries have used information technology in one form or another for at least two decades. Librarians have readily embraced information technology networks such as AARNET, the Australian wing of the global Internet. There is a perception however, in some quarters of the Australian library and academic world that off-campus students do not need to tap into a range of information resources regardless of whether they are traditional or electronic resources. Instead, it is thought by some that study packages accompanied by sets of readings are adequate for students studying remotely. Equity, and the principle of a high calibre of tertiary education which permits students to determine for themselves what they want to read in relation to their study programmes, demand that off-campus students should be given the opportunity to have the same degree of information access as that available to on-campus students. Electronic-based services and resources such as those described, complemented by the established traditional services can further open up information access to off-campus students scattered throughout the continent or those studying in offshore locations.

The advent of open learning in Australia in all its many dimensions accompanied by its fundamental philosophy of flexibility and choice, plus the incorporation of technology-based remote educational access poses exciting challenges for libraries. The OLAA programme may well act as a catalyst, energising libraries to re-evaluate their provision of services role to all off-campus students. The OLESS project and other technology oriented open access initiatives such as the community-based telecentres should stimulate libraries to consider a greater use of technology and technology-based networks in providing open information access to off-campus students. Lindberg's (1987) succinct statement that *technology has much greater potential for providing appropriate information support for noncampus students than any other method. Institutions which can use the new technology to provide superior information resources to noncampus students may gain an important strategic advantage over their academic and corporate competitors* gives both a rationale and a motivator for integrating an electronic off-campus library service with established postal and other off-campus library services.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following librarians for their timely advice on the current status of off-campus library services offered by their libraries, particularly technology-based services: Joan Tucker (Deakin University), Adela Love (University of South Australia), Margaret Small (University of New England), John Nieuwhuis (University of the Southern Cross), John Frylinck (Curtin University), Jennifer Redding (University of Southern Queensland). Thanks are also extended to John Julian (OLAA) for providing information relating to the OLESS project and Jean Wood (Monash University) for background information on Monash technology initiatives directed towards off-campus students.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Australian Library and Information Association (1992). *Libraries: the heart of the matter*. Proceedings of the Australian Library and Information Association. Second Biennial Conference. Ultimo, N.S.W.: Australian Library and Information Association.

Clarke, Sue (1992). "The Telelibrary and electronic document delivery." In *Libraries:the heart of the matter*. Proceedings of the Australian Library and Information Association, Second Biennial Conference. Ultimo, N.S.W.: ALIA.

Christine Crocker (ed.) (1982). *Guidelines for library services to external students*. Ultimo, N.S.W.: Library Association of Australia.

Dawkins, John (1988). *Higher education: a policy statement*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Electronic facilities network to enhance tertiary open learning services. (1993). Summary of an Interim Report submitted to the Department of Employment Education and Training, submitted by Deakin University in collaboration with Strategic Technology Management Pty Ltd. Geelong: Deakin University Press.

Grossner, K. and G. Bagnell (1989). "External students and public libraries: students' perspectives." *Australian Library Journal 38*, (4) 303-317.

Johnson, Richard (1983). *The provision of external studies in Australian higher education*. Canberra: Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission.

Kascus, M. and W. Aguilar (1988). "Providing library support to off-campus programs." *College and Research Libraries 49*, (1) 29-37.

Kopp, James A. (1991). "Can I get from there to here? Technology and off-campus library programs." *Library Trends* 535-551.

Lindberg, D. (1987). "Why automate? Getting information technology off-campus." In B.M. Lessin, (ed.) *Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings*. Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University Press.

Queensland access to higher education: on the road to open learning (1989). Report of the Working Party on Decentralised Delivery of Higher Education. Brisbane: Board of Advanced Education.

Radford, Neil A. (1988). "A university view of cooperative borrowing." *Australian Academic and Research Libraries 19*, (3) 140-145.

Review of efficiency and effectiveness in higher education (1986). Report of the Committee of Enquiry, Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Winter, Andrew and Margaret Cameron (1983). *External students and their libraries*. Geelong, Vic.: Deakin University.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS: THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN EXPERIENCE

Elizabeth F. Watson

INTRODUCTION

Distance education as a strategy for providing tertiary-level education in the Commonwealth Caribbean has, within recent years, gained considerable significance. Several reasons account for this including the fact that education is greatly revered within the region as a channel for socio-economic mobility. The steadily growing populations in many of these nations make it difficult for traditional institutions of learning to satisfy the educational aspirations of all who wish to gain academic qualifications. Distance education provides economies of scale that traditional systems of teaching and learning do not facilitate. Distance education also overcomes temporal and physical constraints, allowing those who cannot go to conventional teaching institutions to pursue programmes of study at their own pace within their own domicile.

While distance education was formerly seen as an "inferior" option, the rise and development of a distance education pedagogy has changed the status and perception of courses offered and pursued through this method. Jevons' (1984) statement that *distance education will continue to rise in status and expand in scale and ... that it should not* [be regarded] *as a minor specialty but as a leading edge of progress for ... education as a whole* places distance education firmly within the new education order. Whilst Jevons' statement was made from the perception of another culture his opinion also has credence for the English-speaking Caribbean.

SCOPE OF THE PAPER

The intent of this paper is to look at the library needs of tertiary-level distance learners in the Commonwealth Caribbean. Particular emphasis will be placed on the needs of students registered at the University of the West Indies (UWI) as distance learners.

The UWI is a regional institution which is funded by 14 individual countries and islands which were or are colonies of Great Britain. Thus, there are many areas and aspects of commonality between these states. However, it is also important to recognise that there are also differences which must inform the decision-making process which affect the region. The Commonwealth Caribbean forms a wide arc from the Bahamas in the north to Trinidad and Tobago in the south. It includes Belize in the Central American archipelago. The Caribbean Sea is both a dividing and linking force. This makes distance education a particularly attractive option in the effort to satisfy the tertiary level education needs of countries and individuals.

LIBRARY SERVICES FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

The need for adequate, well-developed and accessible library services to intramural tertiary-level students is an entrenched principle (Store, 1981). Further, an important qualitative measure used to assess intramural education is the range or scope of library services available to support such programmes (Kascus and Aguilar, 1988). Kaye's (1981) statement that *a student needs to have access to a well stocked library* and his further observation that *its absence is perhaps the single most serious limitation of distance education at university level* is particularly pertinent.

Orton and Wiseman (1977) found in their examination of library services to distance learners that such services are generally a neglected and underdeveloped support service. Reasons for this include:

- distance learners being outside of the main stream of tertiary-level education systems and as a consequence the information needs of such learners being neglected (Fisher, 1982);
- the perception that distance learners do not need library services (Store, 1981). Implicit in this assumption is the idea that should such needs exist, some other agency will assume responsibility for providing these services;
- the view that distance educators can provide – through "packages" – all the learning materials that distance learners require (Store, 1981);
- the lack of formal links between distance educators and the providers of information services within the teaching institution;
- distance education programmes often being managed and administered differently from intramural courses;
- distance education programmes often being delivered from institutions other than traditional educational institutions which themselves often do not have libraries; and finally,
- the invisible nature of this corps of students which facilitates a disregard for their existence and a lack of acknowledgement of their library and information needs by both distance education administrators and information providers.

It is a major concern that access to library and information services of any kind is not usually identified as a critical support need for distance education. Carty's (1991) observation that *unfortunately, the majority of those writing about distance education do not appear to regard the library as a significant element as they make only passing reference or no reference at all to its role* and that *Holmberg's recent extensive bibliography on distance education contains only five references to library services* is telling. Cavanagh (1994) reaffirms this perception based on an informal survey of several documents on distance education which reveals that library services to distance learners are seldom reported on.

The approach of the (British) Open University (OU) to this issue must also be noted, as many distance teaching institutions have patterned their operations on this model. When the OU was opened, at the policy level it was decided that OU students would not be allowed access to the library at Milton Keynes. The influence of this position on deliberations by other distance teaching institutions on this issue cannot be discounted. It is important to recognise, however, that the OU's decision was taken against the background that any resident in the U.K. had access to an extensive and well supported public library system. Public libraries, which served as the "poor man's university," had in their collections materials which could support the learning needs of tertiary-level students. Further, these students in most instances were able to negotiate user privileges from tertiary-level colleges located within their communities. Inter-library loans were also used to support the information needs of such students.

Declining budgets and other economic constraints have affected British libraries generally. This has led to a contraction of resource allocations and service provision. As a result OU students now no longer have easy access to the quality and range of library services which were formerly available to them. Additionally, public libraries are also finding it increasingly difficult to continue their extensive support to OU students. The OU itself has had to review its library policy and currently, postgraduate students of the OU are allowed to use the library at Milton Keynes.

Commonwealth Caribbean public and other libraries lack the development and sophistication of British library systems. Hence the ability of local units to support tertiary-level education is almost non-existent. Exacerbating the situation is the fact that local bookstores are unable to cater to the needs of what is, from their view, a very small and specialised group of customers. These factors make it necessary for distance teaching institutions in the Caribbean to include adequate library services as a part of their provision of student support services.

DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN

Distance education as a means of satisfying one's educational goals is not a recent development in the Commonwealth Caribbean. British institutions such as Wolsey Hall, the University of London's external degree programme as well as many professional bodies, particularly British, have all provided distance programmes and courses of education and training that have been pursued with success by many West Indians. The fact that many senior members of our own profession have gained their professional qualification through this modality attests to the activities of the British Library Association in this regard.

What are new are the institutions, strategies and systems used to provide distance education in the region. A review of the major programmes of distance education in the Commonwealth Caribbean indicates that distance education is being increasingly used as a means of providing educational opportunities.

CURRENT (MAJOR) SYSTEMS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN

UWIDITE, the University of the West Indies Teaching Enterprise (formerly Experiment) began operation in 1983 on a three-year grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This initiative sought to test the viability of providing distance education at two levels: firstly, to provide training in established university programmes; and secondly, to provide training opportunities in specialised areas for specifically targeted groups of persons. Despite many challenges UWIDITE's success cannot be denied. Indeed, the intent to expand and upgrade the telecommunications system now in use for UWIDITE is testimony to the important contribution of distance education in the region. It is unfortunate, however, that the initial project which gave UWIDITE its genesis failed to include provision for the expansion and institutionalisation of adequate library facilities to support such programmes. This omission continues to be a feature of all UWIDITE projects.

Within Jamaica, the Ministry of Education has initiated a system of distance education to provide training opportunities for teachers. This is particularly appropriate for persons located in rural Jamaica who are unable, for a variety of reasons, to attend one of the several teacher training colleges within that island.

The Government of Guyana is also formalising a distance education programme to train teachers. The goal of this project is to provide expanded training and retraining opportunities for Guyanese teachers.

The Government of Dominica has also pursued discussions with a Canadian institution with a view to establishing distance education links.

These examples indicate that distance education as a modality for learning is firmly ensconced in a period of growth and expansion in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

A brief examination of the School of Continuing Studies of the UWI is necessary in order to place in context the urgent need to provide adequate library services for its distance students.

THE UWI SCHOOL OF CONTINUING STUDIES

The establishment of Extramural Department (EMD), now known as the School of Continuing Studies (SCS) is based on a tradition which is a feature of many of the older British universities. The EMDs of the British universities were established to provide continuing education, cultural enrichment and contact between the university and the community. The EMCs of the UWI were established with similar understandings when the university commenced operations in 1948. Most particularly they were to serve as the university's presence across the region in the countries which finance the university. This presence was deemed to be particularly important in countries in which campuses would not be established.

A book collection was seen as an integral part of each centre, but to call these collections libraries would accord them a status that would be unjustified. Generally, the collections were managed by junior (and usually untrained) staff and the funding to support the growth and development of these collections was inadequate at best and frequently non-existent. Whilst some centres were more fortunate than others, over time, these collections declined progressively in terms of their quality and quantity. Their ability to support tertiary-level education was therefore illusory.

The 1983 thrust of the UWI into distance education occasioned fundamental changes in the objectives and work and at the SCSs. In particular, their spheres of educational activities were expanded considerably. In relation to library services it was evident that the existing collections could not satisfy the learning needs of tertiary-level students. Further, the library facilities at most of the SCSs were inadequate.

The need to upgrade the resources and facilities at the SCS is also supported by the fact that students pursuing UWIDITE courses followed the same curriculum as intramural students. Distance students were also required to write the same examinations. Thus their information needs and their tutors' expectations of them were no different from those of intramural students.

UWI INITIATIVES TO PROVIDE LIBRARY SERVICES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS

The UWI's Library Committee has, from time to time, focussed on the issue of library services, facilities and resources at all of the SCSs. It noted that library services at these sites, where they exist, are considerably inferior to those being provided at the campuses. Consequently, a number of proposals have been made to upgrade the existing services. The principal cause for the non-institutionalisation of these recommendations has been a lack of funding. The matter has assumed greater urgency with the commencement of distance education at the UWI.

A 1993 document prepared by the Office of University Services at the Cave Hill campus addresses the deficiencies of the library services to distance learners in the Eastern Caribbean. The document states that *a major limiting factor to the scope and success of university outreach, distance education and continuing education programmes in the OECS islands has been limited library support.* The document sets out comprehensively what would be the minimum requirements for a library service at each of the centres to support the tertiary-level distance courses of the UWI. Additional beneficiaries would be persons involved in outreach and continuing education activities coordinated by the SCSs.

This document lists the following as necessary to support a reasonable level of library service for education activities at the SCS:

- Adequate number of books and journals aiming to have some 20,000 titles per centre;
- Adequate staff to manage these libraries (at least one library assistant for each centre) and a program for training the staff
- More space (for some islands) allocated for library services

The document also states that with the expansion of distance education at the three campuses from 1993 that *there will be a critical need to begin a library development programme at this time* (UWI, 1993). Reference has already been made to the changed role and scope of the SCSs. However, the *de facto* changes that have occurred are as a result of operational necessity rather than through the implementation of policy decisions which would have led to major infrastructural changes, including the provision of library facilities and services. The importance of libraries to teaching and learning is well recognised and documented. The fact that the library services for Caribbean distance learners are not readily available invites analysis.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY SERVICES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN

Many factors mitigate against the development and institutionalisation of adequate library services at the SCSs which serve as the focal points for the delivery of distance education for the UWI. Literature on the subject writings of distance education in the Caribbean is revealing.

Survey of the literature

A perusal of recent literature published on distance education within the English-speaking Caribbean provides a point of departure. Library services to support distance education receive scant or no attention.

The most recent survey of UWIDITE was conducted in 1992 by Renwick, Shale and Rao. This survey was funded by The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and it will be used as a blueprint for the development and expansion of distance education at the UWI. The report of this survey does not include a major reference or section on how the library and information needs of students in these programmes will be satisfied. Library services are mentioned *en passant*, included under student services in the statement that includes "student computers, laboratory assistants and consumable materials". The section that deals with student support services has no reference to library services. Figure 4: "Course delivery: student support" subsumes library (services) under learning resources without their detailing the scope and range. Significantly, the library is not mentioned in the management chain proposed by these esteemed consultants.

A critical oversight during the information-gathering process for this survey was that the university librarian was not one of the persons interviewed. The lack of input from this source will impact negatively on the formulation of any policy on library services to distance learners registered at the UWI, given that this document will, for some time, form the blueprint for UWI distance education programmes. That this document is completely silent on the enunciation of what comprises an adequate library service to support distance education at the student's point of learning is perplexing, given the pivotal role that libraries are known to play in tertiary-level education. Moreover, within the UWI there is a convention that whenever a new course or programme is being established, initial capital funding includes a sum for library resources.

Two in-house reports on UWI distance education initiatives (Lalor 1982; Lalor and Marrett 1986) are also silent on the provision of and need for library services to support the work of UWIDITE in the non-campus countries.

The country reports on Guyana (O'Rourke, 1990) and Jamaica (Greig, 1989) which were produced under the aegis of COL make no specific references to library and/or information services. Teacher resource centres are recommended for Jamaica but these are seen as materials production centres only. The satisfaction of the information needs of the producers and users of these materials was not addressed.

Pennant's 1991 study, conducted on behalf of the Caribbean Development Bank, also fails to include any major reference to library services. This omission is a matter for concern, given the purpose of the study. It was commissioned to serve as the lead document for a funding proposal to a major international lending agency for the expansion of distance education at the UWI. The absence of a definitive statement on library services is not without significance. One of the principal criticisms of distance education is centred on or around the issues of parity and equity with intramural programmes. A statement on library and information services is usually required as a part of any study and project document that concerns funding for educational purposes. Moreover where library deficiencies exist in intramural programmes the institutions are expected to indicate how these deficiencies will be corrected. The absence of a pronouncement on library facilities and services to support UWIDITE programmes in the Pennant document, with its implication that they are unnecessary, is therefore a grave oversight.

The persistence of these circumstances is particularly curious, given that these documents have all been produced by educators who would not tolerate the absence of adequate library services for face-to-face teaching and learning.

The lack of adequate library facilities reinforces the perception that distance education is a "second-class option" for education. Complete reliance on packaged materials also places students at the mercy of the tutor in terms of their knowledge base. Exposing students only to information that is predetermined by their tutors severely curtails the development of a range of learning and information-gathering skills. Dependence on packaged materials as the principal and sometimes only means of information also encourages rote learning. At the tertiary level students should develop the skills to seek, synthesize, analyse and apply information, which cannot happen when reading is limited to prescribed materials. A restricted information base and a lack of opportunity to develop life serving information skills are not in the interest of the learner.

Further, the absence of a clearly enunciated policy statement on library services to distance learners reinforces the trend to exclude library services as a part of the planning, development and management of distance education systems.

Economic constraints

Regrettably, libraries are not particularly high on the list of priorities of planners and politicians. Partridge's (1988) comment that libraries *do not get votes* is illuminating. The development and expansion of libraries tends to be overlooked or deferred indefinitely in favour of projects that have a high impact and visibility in the minds of the political directorate.

The economies of the countries of the region have been on the decline. This spiral dates from the oil crisis of the 1970s and has continued to the present time. Consequently, many of the countries which fund the university have not been able to meet their financial commitments to maintain the university's operations at a steady state, far less to meet the financial obligations that new developments such as distance education require.

The situation is made worse by the fact that many of the countries which were formerly colonies of Britain have become independent. Therefore, direct funding for education from the metropole is now no longer available. Funds from international agencies, which themselves are facing financial difficulties, have become, over time, increasingly difficult to access. Hence, funding to support distance education and, in particular, library services for this activity is dwindling.

Philosophical and policy issues

As has been discussed, reports on the region's distance education initiatives are ominously silent on the availability and provision of quality library services. Allied to this is the fact that the UWI itself has not issued a policy statement on library services to its distance learners.

The UWI's Library Committee has, on a number of occasions, discussed, explored and recommended what would be required to provide adequate library services at the SCSs. However, these deliberations have not been translated into institutional policy. This situation compares unfavourably with the UWI's policies on the provision of library services for intramural courses and programmes.

Another issue which needs to be dealt with at the policy level is the question of access to campus collections by distance learners, when those students happen to be in a campus country. Currently, these facilities are principally for the use of persons involved in campus-based programmes. Can or should this situation continue or is there a case for extending library privileges and, if so, to what extent? One can argue that if distance students in a campus territory are allowed access to the campus collection, they are placed in a preferential position in terms of access to the information *vis-à-vis* their colleagues in the non-campus countries. On the other hand, to deny distance students in campus countries access to these collections would be a curious decision.

There is a critical need for the university to formulate and institute a policy on library services to distance learners. Such a statement is a necessary first step in the development of a greatly needed service.

Financial provision

To make any policy statement operational the allocation of appropriate funding is necessary. It is recognised that funding at the required levels may not be possible from the initial stages. However, an incremental approach over a 6 to 12 year period (given the UWIs triennial cycle for funding) would, in the long term, redress many of the deficiencies that exist. Ultimately the funding of library services to distance learners should be at the same levels and should use the same norms as are applied for intramural programmes.

Staff development and training needs

The provision of services to distance learners is a relatively new phenomenon for professional librarians in the Caribbean. Traditionally librarians have dealt with clients who **come** to the library to satisfy their information needs: direct contact with patrons has been the norm. Distance learning introduces a new corps of clients with changed profiles. The construct of an invisible group of information seekers needs to be understood fully. The ramifications that distance has on library services needs to be comprehended, explored and appreciated to their fullest. Conventional strategies will not suffice. New and creative modalities need to be employed to cater to the information needs of these learners.

Library schools have the responsibility to expose their students to the needs of distance education. The curricula at these institutions must be changed to include distance services as a major area, given the expansion that distance education is experiencing. The role of the Department of Library Studies at the UWI in Jamaica in this regard cannot be overstated. Curriculum changes to reflect and include the needs of this growing sector of students in the region are necessary.

Staffing the service

Posts within the UWI library system have been established based on norms that are applied to support services for intramural courses and programmes. The staffs at the three campus libraries are unable, under the current structure, to provide an adequate level of library service to UWI distance students.

The conceptualisation of UWI staffing norms for library services to distance learners is therefore a pressing need. Until that is done, library services to distance learners in the Caribbean will continue to be operated on an *ad hoc* basis.

Facilities and resources

The library facilities and resources at the SCS sites across the Caribbean are not at levels capable of supporting the courses and programmes offered via distance by the UWI. These facilities, many of them more than 40 years old, require refurbishing and modernisation. Needs range from elementary considerations such as proper shelving to having a plant that can support the use of modern electronic equipment and services.

The resource issue is very critical. The change from being a university presence to becoming a teaching point at the tertiary-level introduces different dimensions to the facilities and resource issues at all of the SCSs. Tertiary-level programmes require not only primary materials, but also secondary and tertiary sources of information for learning and enrichment. Information needs at this level cannot be answered simply by reading a copy of the latest text on a subject. Journals, audiovisual materials and other formats of information are necessary to support the information requirements of tertiary-level learners.

A new development in the delivery of distance programmes at the UWI, and one that is likely to expand, is that currently a distance course is being taught by academic staff who are resident in two of the non-campus countries. Providing information to support the work of faculty resident in a non-campus country adds a new dimension to the issue of distance librarianship in the Caribbean. Adequate resources are particularly critical to their work.

THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF LIBRARY SERVICES TO DISTANCE LEARNERS IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN

The existence and expansion of distance education programmes in the Caribbean – particularly those emanating from the UWI – dictates that, as a matter of urgency, the issue of library services to distance learners in the region must be addressed. The provision of this service includes many issues. It is critical that planners and policy-makers recognise that adequate library services are a vital component of quality distance programmes. Clear and authoritative statements on the provision of library services need to be enunciated.

The governments which finance the university need to provide the financial support necessary to institute adequate library services for distance learners at the UWI. Allied with the financial resources issue is the construction of new or remodeling existing library facilities at the SCSs in the region.

The financial provision to make these statements operational must be made. Resources – staffing, materials and facilities – need to be allocated at levels capable of meeting the needs of Caribbean distance learners. Adequate staffing, suitable facilities and a quality collection are the ingredients of a high calibre library service.

Librarians themselves have a critical role to play in the development of library services to Caribbean distance learners. They must become proactive in pressing for the development of such services. They need to use whatever fora are available to them, e.g., faculty boards, campus and university committees, their membership on committees of external bodies, opportunities during public debate and private discussion with educators and in their writings, to press the cause for the provision of adequate library services to distance learners. Additionally, librarians must empower themselves so that they can interact positively with distance learners. The training and re-training of professionals must include formal programmes and continuing education activities which focus specifically on the delivery of library services to distance learners. Such activities are critical if information providers are to respond appropriately to the needs of distance learners in the region.

Distance learning as a means of providing education in the Commonwealth Caribbean will continue to expand and grow. To ensure that Caribbean distance learners are not disadvantaged with respect to their information needs and knowledge base the availability of a well developed library service is a priority.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cavanagh, Anthony (1994). "The role of library in off-campus study." In *Research in distance education, 4*. Eds: Terry Evans and David Murphy. Geelong: Deakin University Press.

Carty, Joan (1991). *Library services for distance education students: adequacy of provision: the Open University, Australia and Canada.* Aberystwyth: University College of Wales. M.Lib. thesis.

Fisher, Raymond K. (1982). "Common problems in library resources for off-campus students."*Library services in distance education.* Ed: Christine Crocker. Ultimo, N.S.W.; Library Association of Australia.

Greig, James W. (1989). *Distance education and educational reform in Jamaica: the clock is ticking.* A report to the Ministry of Education of the government of Jamaica prepared at the request of The Commonwealth of Learning. Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

Jevons, Fred (1984). "Distance education in mixed institutions: working towards parity."*Distance Education 5,* (1) 24-37.

Kascus, Marie and Aguilar, William (1988). "Providing library support to off-campus programs."*College and Research Libraries 49,* (1) 29-37.

Kaye, Tom (1981). "Some possible limitations of distance education."*Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association Forum, 5th Suva.* Eds: Peter Crump and Kevin Livingston.

Lalor, Gerald C. (1982). *Report of the Caribbean regional communications services study.* Mona: University of the West Indies.

Lalor, Gerald C. and Christine Marrett (1986). *Report on the University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Experiment*. Mona: University of the West Indies.

Nettleford, Rex (1986). *The University of the West Indies as a regional university in the English-speaking Caribbean (past, present and future). Trends in academic, administrative and organisational aspects with special emphasis on future implications on the restructured UWI.* Caracas: Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

O'Rourke, Jennifer (1990). *Distance education in Guyana.* Report of a consultancy undertaken on behalf of The Commonwealth of Learning. Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

Orton, Larry and John Wiseman (1977). "Library service to part-time students." *Canadian Library Journal 34,* (1) 23-27.

Partridge, W.B. McD. (1988). *Low budget librarianship: managing information in developing countries.* London: Library Association.

Pennant, Dorothy M. (1991). *Preliminary study: continuing and distance education* [at The] *University of the West Indies. Base document, CDB Development project.* Barbados: The Caribbean Development Bank.

Perraton, Hilary (1991). *Administrative structures for distance education.* London and Vancouver: Commonwealth Secretariat and The Commonwealth of Learning.

Renwick, William, Doug Shale and Chandrasekhara Rao (1992). *Distance education at the University of the West Indies: report of an appraisal carried out on behalf of The Commonwealth of Learning*. Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning.

Store, Ron (1980). "Library services in distance teaching: present realities and future possibilities." *Riv Lib File, 3,* (1) 3-10.

The University of the West Indies. Office of University Services (E.C.) (1993). *Project proposal: library services in the OECS.* Cave Hill, Barbados: UWI.

Watson, Elizabeth (1993). "Library services to distance learners in Third World countries: barriers to service." In C. Jacob (Comp.) *6th Off-campus Library Services Conference Proceedings, Kansas City, Missouri.* Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS[1]

THE EDITORS AND COMMENTATOR

Elizabeth F. Watson
Librarian, Learning Resource Centre, The University of the West Indies, P.O. Box 64, Bridgetown, Barbados, West Indies.

Elizabeth Watson has a number of publications on library services for distance education to her credit. In 1992 she conducted a survey of distance library services in three Commonwealth countries: Canada, England and India. The publication *Library services to distance learners in the Commonwealth – a report,* which was published by The Commonwealth of Learning, presents the findings of that research. In addition to being a Past President of her local professional association she is currently Vice-President of the Commonwealth Library Association on whose behalf she coordinated and directed a 1994 international workshop on library services to distance learners in Jamaica.

Neela Jagannathan
Deputy Librarian, Indira Ghandi National Open University, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi 110068, India.

Neela Jagannathan has over a decade of experience in distance librarianship. She was the first Librarian of the B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU) and is currently Deputy Librarian at the Indira Gandhi National Open University. She has also taught, via distance, library and information science at various levels and produced educational materials in a range of media formats at IGNOU and BRAOU. She has several publications in the field both in India and internationally. Her most recent publication is*Speaking for ourselves: women in distance education in India* edited in association with Aha Kanwar and published by The Commonwealth of Learning in 1994.

Jeniphier R. Carnegie
Reference Librarian, Main Library, The University of the West Indies, P.O. Box 1334, Bridgetown, Barbados, West Indies.

Jeniphier Carnegie has published *Critics on West Indian literature: a selected bibliography,* 1979, and the *Selected bibliography of criticism and related works* in Elaine Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido's*Out of the Kumbla: women and Caribbean literature,* 1990. Other bibliographic contributions include an annual listing in the *Journal of West Indian Literature* and *Selected bibliography on the works of Professor Elsa Goveia, Dr. Walter Rodney and Dr. Eric Williams* in*Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs,* 1982. A project that is currently engaging her interest is *Caribbean Women: catalysts for change* under the aegis of the UWI's Centre for Gender and Development Studies. The first personality to be studied is Barbados' first female Governor-General, Her Excellency Dame Nita Barrow. Her other professional interests include bibliographic instruction, user service issues, West Indian literature and gender studies. As consulting editor for this reader she is making a significant contribution to the field of user services in distance librarianship.

---

[1] Prepared from notes submitted by the contributors.

Michael Wooliscroft
University Librarian, University of Otago, P.O. 56, Dunedin, New Zealand

Michael Wooliscroft's work experience spans both public and academic library services in New Zealand. In addition to his responsibilities as the University of Otago's Librarian he advises on library matters at the Otago's two clinical schools. He has been involved with a number of working parties relating to Otago's support services and planning. This includes work on information technology: provision and access policy. His involvement in professional activities has been at both the national and international levels. He is a Past President and a Fellow of the New Zealand Library Association, a Council Member of the New Zealand Academy for the Humanities as well as the Immediate Past President of the Commonwealth Library Association.

THE AUTHORS

Margaret Appleton
User Services Librarian, Central Queensland University, Rockhampton, Queensland 4702, Australia.

Margaret Appleton has been active in the field of in distance librarianship for over 17 years. During this period she has investigated several aspects of the use of technology to deliver library services to distance learners. In 1994 she was given funding to develop a computer-aided learning programme to teach off-campus students how to access remote databases. She has also acted as the coordinator of a team of librarians to write a distance education course on Science Information Sources.

Shirley Behrens
Senior Lecturer, Department of Information Science, Faculty of Arts, University of South Africa, PO Box 392, Pretoria 0001, Republic of South Africa.

Shirley Behrens investigated the library and information skills of undergraduate students and lecturer attitudes to the needs for these skills in a distance learning environment. In addition to teaching reference work at Unisa she has an extensive publications record. With over 30 articles and books to her credit among the topics she has explored are bibliographic control and information literacy.

Terrence Bobb-Semple
Educational Technologist, Calvin McKain Library, University of Technology of Jamaica (formerly, College of Arts Science and Technology), 237 Old Hope Road, Kingston 6, Jamaica, West Indies.

Terrence Bobb-Semple holds the post of Senior Lecturer in Instructional Technology in the Department of Technical Education. He directs CAST's audiovisual centre and is involved in curriculum evaluation. Additional responsibilities include planning the Open Learning/Distance Education development at the CAST. He has conducted a number of workshops/seminars in instructional media and was a presenter at the 1994 Commonwealth Library Association's workshop on Library Services to Distance Learners in Jamaica.

Celia Bockett
External Services Librarian, Massey University, Private Bag 11054, Palmerston North, New Zealand

Celia Bockett joined the Massey University Library in 1989 after completing a Diploma in Librarianship. She worked for nearly five years as a Reference Librarian, with primary responsibility for bibliographic instruction. Since 1993 she has been involved in distance library services.

Professor Peter Brophy
University Librarian and Head, Library and Learning Resource Services, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, Lancashire PR1 2HE, England

Professor Peter Brophy combines the roles of head of an operational library service with that of head of one of the UK's leading research centres in the field of library and information management. The University of Central Lancashire is one of the UK's larger universities, with over 20,000 students, and traces its history back to 1828. Its Library and Learning Resource Services are delivered through a total of 19 service points in the North-West of England. The University's Centre for Research in Library and Information Management (CERLIM), founded in 1993, undertakes a wide variety of research studies in collaboration with partners throughout the UK and Europe.

Anthony Cavanagh
Document Delivery Librarian, University Library, Deakin University, Geelong Campus, Geelong, Victoria 3217, Australia

Anthony Cavanagh oversees the Off Campus, Interlibrary Loans and Intercampus Loans services at Deakin University. He has a long-standing interest in library access issues for distance education students and in the wider use of information technology to support distance students. He has published several papers and book chapters on these and other issues concerned with library services.

Linda Claudia de Four
Librarian, Main Library, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, St. Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago, West Indies

Miss de Four has ten years experience in public librarianship. Miss de Four has conducted library skills programmes for library staff of media organisations in Trinidad and Tobago, lectures on communications and interpersonal relationships for para-professionals, and speaks to secondary school students on librarianship as a career. Miss de Four is also the author of a discography on calypsoes.

Deborah Goodall
PhD research student, Department of Information and Library Management, University of Northumbria at Newcastle, Lipman Building, Sandyford Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8ST, England

Deborah Goodall graduated from Loughborough University, Department of Library and Information Studies, in 1987 and has since worked as a practitioner and a researcher in both the academic and public library sectors.

240

Lorraine Grobler

Librarian, Graduate School for Business Leadership, University of South Africa, PO Box 392, Pretoria 0001.

Lorraine Grobler is a subject librarian in the Unisa Library. Included in the areas of her responsibility is the provision of bibliographic services to staff and students of the School of Business. Her professional experience is varied and she has worked in academic libraries for the last 10 years. She is currently researching for a master's degree on the development of an affirmative action training programme for a South African library. Her other professional interests include user education, in-service training and the role of mentoring in libraries.

Neela Jagannathan

Deputy Librarian, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi 110068, India,

Neela Jagannathan has considerable experience in distance librarianship. She worked at the first State Open University in India and is now a member of the library staff at the first National Open University of her country. Her involvement in distance librarianship includes work as both a distance library administrator and a distance educator in the field of librarianship.

Janet Jenkins

Consultant in Distance Education, Swatchways, The Quay, Wivenhoe, Colchester C07 9BU, England

Janet Jenkins has been actively engaged in distance education for over 25 years. She has served not only as a distance educator but also as a consultant in distance education in many countries, most recently in Guyana, Mauritius and South Africa. She has many publications to her credit. Before becoming a full-time consultant she worked with the Open Learning Foundation (UK), Commonwealth of Learning and the International Centre for Distance Education. She has published extensively in distance education.

Magnus John

Information Service Manager, International Centre for Distance Learning, The Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, England.

Since 1989, Magnus John has been Information Services Manager at the International Centre for Distance Learning based at the Open University in Milton Keynes, England. Prior to taking up his present post, he was Liaison Librarian (Arts) at the Open University. Magnus has published widely on distance education in Africa and has served as a resource person for a number of seminars and conferences on distance education internationally.

Judith Kamau

Chairman, Department of Educational Studies, College of Education and External Studies, Faculty of External Studies, University of Nairobi, P.O. Box 30197, Nairobi, Kenya.

Dr. Judith Kamau is Head of the Department of Education Studies, Faculty of External Studies, University of Nairobi. Her major professional interest is study materials development for distance education, principally print and audio formats. She has worked as a distance education consultant in Zambia, Botswana, Namibia and Jamaica and is currently on a two-year secondment as Head of the Distance Education Unit at the University of Botswana.

Uma Kanjilal

Lecturer, Faculty of Library and Information Science, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi 110068, India.

Dr. Uma Kanjilal has been a lecturer at IGNOU since 1989. She has been involved in the planning and preparation of course materials for the bachelor's and master's degree programme in Library and Information Science at IGNOU. Her Ph.D. thesis was on the "Role of library and modern information technology in distance education (with special reference to India)."

Margaret Macpherson

Executive Director – Library Services, Charles Sturt University, Private Bag 45, Bathurst, New South Wales 2795, Australia.

Margaret Macpherson has been involved in distance education libraries for almost 20 years. She strongly supports cooperative library activities, networking and reciprocal borrowing especially through Unilic.

Lucy Marsden

External Services Librarian, Massey University, Private Bag 11054, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Lucy Marsden has been with Massey University Library since 1971. She has worked in the reference, serials, administration and external services departments. As an External Services Librarian she is intimately involved in providing library services to extramural students, to students at Massey's Albany campus as well as supporting the inter-library loan services of her library.

David Meacham

Director of Research and Development, Open Learning Institution, Charles Sturt University, Private Bag 45, Bathurst, New South Wales 2795, Australia.

Professor Meacham is one of the earliest graduates of the Open University of the U.K. He is a Past President of the Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association. He has published widely in the field of distance education and done service as a consultant on a number of occasions. His special research interest is in developing countries and he has worked in the Solomon Islands, the Republic of the Maldives and the Republic of Vietnam.

Geoffrey R.V. Mmari

Vice-Chancellor, The Open University of Tanzania, P.O. Box 23409, Dar es Salaam , Tanzania.

Professor Mmari is Vice-Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania. Prior to this appointment, he was the Co-ordinator of the Open University Planning Office. His career spans both the practical and professional sides of post-primary education and his experience at senior levels of tertiary education is extensive.

Joan Pitchforth

External Services Librarian, Massey University, Private Bag 11054, Palmerston North, New Zealand

Joan Pitchforth worked with the National Library of New Zealand from 1987. In 1989 she joined the staff of Massey University Library. Her initial assignment was in the Serials Department and in 1991 she was reassigned to work in the Extramural Section which provides library services for Massey's distance learners.

R. Satyanarayana
Librarian and Officer-in-Charge, Faculty of Library and Information Science, Library and Documentation Division, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi 110068, India.

Professor Satyanarayana has published over 50 papers in professional journals and has a number of bibliographical compilations to his credit. He has been the associate editor of *Annals of Library Science and Documentation,* editor of the Indian Library Association *News Bulletin* and is presently a member of the editorial board of the *Annuals of Library Science and Documentation* published by INSDOC. He is also a member of the governing body of DELNET.

Alexander L. Slade
Programme Director, Continuing Studies Library Service, University of Victoria, Box 1800, Victoria, British Columbia V8W 3H5, Canada.

Alexander (Sandy) Slade is responsible for coordinating library support for the graduate and undergraduate programmes at his university. He also manages a fee-based library service for non-university clients. In addition to developing his university's distance education library services he has convened two Canadian workshops in the subject. He was primarily responsible for the 1993 Canadian Library Association's publication *Guidelines for library support of distance learning in Canada.*

Hayley Solomon
Distance Librarian, University of Otago, P.O. Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand.

Originally from South Africa, Hayley Solomon holds an honours degree in Information Science and is currently completing a master's degree in health-related information issues in New Zealand. Her current post at the University of Otago is that of Distance Librarian.

Beverley A. Steele
Resident Tutor, School of Continuing Studies, The University of the West Indies, P.O. Box 439, St. George's, Grenada, West Indies.

Beverley Steele's keen interest in distance teaching and learning dates from the UWI's entry into the field of distance education. As a Resident Tutor she is intimately involved with distance learners and all issues relating to course delivery and administration. Her involvement in distance education acquired an added dimension when she began to deliver and develop materials for a first-year distance education course in Sociology for the Caribbean. Her other academic interests include gender issues, folk dance, cultural survivals, the effects of World War II on the people of the Eastern Caribbean and library development in small states.

Joan Tucker
External Services Librarian, Deakin University, Geelong 3217, Victoria, Australia

Joan Tucker is involved in providing library services to Deakin University's distance learners. In 1983 the service recorded that over 55, 000 items were sent by courier service to these students. She has presented and published a number of papers on distance librarianship within Australia and beyond.

Marie-Thérèse Van Dyk

User Services Librarian, School of Education, Monash University, Gippsland Campus, Churchill, Victoria 3842, Australia.

Marie-Thérèse Van Dyk is at the Gippsland Campus of Monash University. Her career approach has been based on a "cafeteria" style which has caused her to be involved in libraries undergoing change and include libraries in academia, public and special libraries. She has previously worked in the Netherlands. In 1993 she was assigned to establish the Open Learning Library and Information Service which coordinates an Australian-wide library network to support students registered with the Open Learning Agency of Australia. She has also served as a lecturer in librarianship.

Elizabeth F. Watson

Librarian, Learning Resource Centre, The University of the West Indies, P.O. Box 64, Bridgetown, Barbados, West Indies.

Elizabeth Watson has been an audiovisual librarian for over 15 years. She was responsible for establishing the only Learning Resource Centre at her university. Her responsibilities include the development of a collection of commercially produced materials and the production of in-house audiovisual materials which include video, audio, graphic and photographic formats. In addition to publications in media librarianship she facilitated training opportunities for a number of persons from around the Caribbean in several aspects of audiovisual services. Her other professional interests include personnel relations and continuing professional education.

Peter Wynne

Research Fellow, Centre for Research in Library and Information Management, University of Central Lancashire, Preston PR1 2HE, England.

Peter Wynne's special option at library school – commercial and technical librarianship – led to a number of appointments in the provision of business information in public and special libraries. He has also worked in the private sector as an Information Manager for a development consultancy.